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MIDDLESEX UNIVERSITY: NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WORK BASED LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS

Managing Change Through Curriculum Innovation

(Building a Network of Learning : beyond the boundary)

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Project submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for Module No DPS 5120
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Building a Network of Learning: beyond the boundary

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Abbreviations

AP(E)L	Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning
BA	Bachelor of Arts (Degree)
BPhil	Bachelor of Philosophy (Degree)
BTEC	Business and Technician Education Council (now Edexcel)
CAT(S)	Credit Accumulation and Transfer (Systems)
C&G	City and Guilds
CE	Continuing Education
Cert HE	Certificate of Higher Education
CLAIT	Computer Literacy and Information Technology
CLL	Centre for Lifelong Learning
COSE	Computer operated services in education (Staffordshire University)
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DFEE	Department for Education and Employment
Dip HE	Diploma of Higher Education
EBC	East Birmingham College (of Further Education)
EO	Equal Opportunities
ESF	European Social Fund
ESOL	English as a second language
FE	Further Education
FEFC	Further Education Funding Council
FTE	Full time equivalent
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GNVQ	General National Vocational Qualification
HE	Higher Education
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEIs	Higher Education Institution(s)
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Council
HND	Higher National Diploma
ILA(s)	Individual Learning Accounts

InCAA	Inter-Consortium for Credit and Credit Transfer
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IS	Information Services (University of Birmingham)
IT	Information Technology
LL	Lifelong Learning
M.Ed	Masters of Education (Degree)
NUCCAT	Northern Universities Consortium for Credit and Credit Transfer
NNEB	Nursery Nursing Education Board
RAE	Research Assessment Exercise
RSA	Royal Society of Arts
SCYS	Sikh Community and Youth Service (Birmingham)
SEEC	South East England Consortium for Credit
TDLB	Training and Development Lead Body
UCE	University Central England
UFI	University for Industry
VLL	Vocational Lifelong Learning
WA	Women's Academy
WBL	Work Based Learning
WEA	Workers' Education Association
WITCS	Westhill Information Technology and Computer Services

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Introduction and Explication of the Project

It must be conceded that this 'project' represents work in progress as both an intellectual challenge and as an intervention in practice and provision within a higher education institution undergoing a fundamental transition. The term 'project' refers to the full range of activities and developments described and analysed in this project report. The project itself is on-going and not subject to academic 'closure'. The term 'explication' when used in the report refers to the narrative and sequence of elements within the project. The explication itself attempts to reach a conclusion in phase 3 where 'outputs and products' are described. Where necessary the explication provides a self-conscious commentary on the project, especially where theoretical issues are involved. It tells a partial story only, but one which it is hoped yields valid lessons and understanding.

The real life focus of the project is Westhill College of Higher Education which, in the period dealt with, was faced with major institutional challenges to its academic and financial viability due to its size and recent history. On joining the college in September 1997 both the new Principal and Deputy Principal had believed in the academic and financial viability of the institution as a continuing independent and autonomous entity. Such was the stated position, when both senior staff took up post, and in all fairness to past and present college members the college had never returned a deficit budget on the recurrent accounts. Furthermore, there were (and remain) long term resources invested by the college trustees on behalf of Westhill. However, within a period of three months of the new management team taking office it became clear that the long term prospects for a completely independent and diversified higher education college such as Westhill were pessimistic if it had to continue to rely on public funding bodies for practically all of its income whilst its student numbers were capped at less than 1000 FTEs. By late 1997 the College's funding bodies (HEFCE and TTA) were unable and unwilling to guarantee growth in student numbers for Westhill. Furthermore, it was becoming clear that the quality of student life and experience was suffering in comparison to that available to much larger neighbouring universities.

Faced with such prospects the senior management, the Governors and the Trustees of Westhill sought a radical option! (see Appendix 1 – document 1). A twin track of developmental change was proposed involving the generation of new approaches to learning and provision (embodied in the creation of a Centre for Lifelong Learning) and, almost simultaneously, the creation of a strategic alliance. This alliance eventually turned out to be with the University of Birmingham, of which Westhill historically was an accredited and affiliated institution. The narrative of this project is, however, not primarily concerned with the alliance. Rather, the alliance should be viewed as a ‘framing’ reality and continuing context for the development of learning opportunities which are the main menu detailed here. Curriculum driven institutional change, the development of sites of learning and the evolution of a network of learning are the nodal points of Westhill’s developing contribution to the alliance and are the main focus of work developed in this project. This arena of professional work, involving discourse, dialogue, negotiation, innovation and managing institutional change, involved above all what Winter and Maisch (1998) refer to as “authoritative involvement” in testing out new formulations of knowledge and new (for Westhill) methods and opportunities for learning. It is hoped that these concerns find expression in the explication that follows and for which the author carries the major institutional responsibility in the process analysed below.

Phase 1 of the project lays out the intellectual framework for the theoretical and empirical material which follows. ‘Lifelong learning’ as a conceptual intervention in the market for education is considered and an attempt is made to illustrate the importance of continuous learning through the exploration of some of its modern and distinctive features such as the idea of open learning systems, accreditation and the significance of adult learning which brings lived experience to the learning process.

A keynote perspective is developed in the first part of the explication - that of constructivism. In exploring a context for the idea of sites of learning and for the

empirical data and research evidence on widening participation in Phase 2, the project needed to adopt a credible and appropriate approach to a theory of learning which underpinned pedagogical practice. The social constructivists are considered to have demonstrated such credibility and relevance. A starting point at least was viewing learning as the subjective construction of meaning, rooted in the individual and collective experience of people involved in activities which have objective and testable characteristics.

This theme is taken further by a consideration of specific conditions which include work and personal experience as learning contexts which offer 'affordance' (i.e. opportunities to learn, linked to demonstrable experience).

Building on this conceptual foundation, knowledge construction is theorised, and it is held that learners deepen their knowledge and understanding by engaging in real-life and real-time, authentic tasks. The relevance of some formal classroom learning is questioned and the notion of learning competence is stated to be able to gain support from a teaching perspective which draws upon theories of learning.

Part 1 in Phase 1 represents therefore an attempt to 'locate' and contextualise both a research and development task which is explored in greater depth in Phase 2 of the project via the activities of the Centre for Lifelong Learning at Westhill. A wider conceptual map of learning is conjectured. The map contains 'navigation points' and includes what has evolved into the component parts of 'lifelong learning'. Implicitly a critique is presented of a fixed, static and institutionalised curriculum model which has been pervasive in the past. This was built upon didactic teaching methodologies associated perhaps with earlier 'factory models' of learning, hierarchical social organisation and cultural conformism.

Perhaps the most counter-productive aspect of this older model which persists today is the separation of learning from communal and working life and its continued 'investiture' in school or institutionalised learning. Learning and schooling have been practically synonymous in the past and there are those who have held the view

that “schooling” helped produce modern dysfunctional communities (Illich 1971, Freire 1972). However, the purposes of the project are not simply to critique the past and present realities but rather to move forward to present aspects of a new model for effective future learning.

The new knowledge-based communities and economies of modern society now require new competencies. The old competencies of numeracy, literacy and communication, it is argued, have been replaced by new ones which involve abstraction (manipulation of thoughts and thinking patterns), systems of inter-related thinking, experimentation, collaboration and mastery of new information and communication technology.

These new competencies are certainly learned, but not necessarily taught. The project has thus attempted to root practical innovation and change within a model or framework within which higher order thinking skills cannot simply be taught - but rather are taken to grow out of practice, experience, problem and task solving and immersion in a ‘learning community’ (which is a real life environment, as opposed to a constructed core of formal social and educational institutions).

Learning is conceptualised as only one consequence of teaching in formal contexts. The project as a whole has sought to identify and operationalise new sets of learning contexts and conditions. Following this line of reasoning, a new paradigm for example, would use the whole community which includes the workplace, to support learning and develop a shared learning agenda - including:

- facilitation, not didacticism;
- knowledge construction, rather than knowledge transfer;
- knowledge use and reflection rather than repetition;
- active rather than passive or inert knowledge.

The project has attempted to engage with the proposition that the new learning and competencies cannot be gained only in the classroom. Dependency on the institution or teacher is seen to be inimical to true autonomy at both the individual and social levels within this framework, and this represents a domain assumption for the empirical research reported in Phase 2 of the project and a defining reality for the solutions posed in Phase 3.

Part 2 of Phase 1 outlines a narrative which is both biographical and institutional in character. Within two months of accepting the post of Deputy Principal at Westhill College of Higher Education (in September 1997) it had become clear to the author and to the Principal of Westhill that two critical developments would need to take place in order to safeguard the future of the College. First, the College would need to devise and deliver a new approach to its curriculum profile. It would need to develop significant part-time, non-traditional modes of learning and enter the post-Dearing age of competence-related, work-related and more market-oriented learning and teaching. Second, and most pointedly, a major projected shortfall of recurrent income by 2001 would see the College bankrupt were nothing to be done. A 'Strategic Alliance' with a much larger partner was seen to be the solution. Part 2 of Phase 1 contains references to the actual documents which both describe and verify the process of constructing the alliance, as do Appendices 1 and 3. The analysis of this process seeks to highlight the conceptual and professional work which took place and could be attributed to the author. This work represents a strategic contribution to the whole future of Westhill and its relationship with its approved alliance partner, the University of Birmingham.

Part 2 of Phase 1 also details the establishment of the Centre for Lifelong Learning (CLL), itself a key element of the alliance concept and held to be central to the negotiations between Westhill and the University of Birmingham. The project author (the Deputy Principal) proposed, introduced and managed the implementation of the CLL as a major factor in the wider evolution of institutional strategy for the college.

Phase 2 of the project gives details of the collaborative research and development activity which was undertaken by the CLL team in 1998-99. The results are tentative at this stage (April/May 1999) but are intended to lead into a wider and expanded project for delivering the 'Dearing agenda' which is described at Phase 3 part 2. The research activity dealt with here was incorporated into a major initiative on widening participation involving two other higher education institutions and five further education providers. The Deputy Principal was responsible for this project and the funding it generated. Appendix 4 contains the bids and funding applications written by the Deputy Principal and the HEFCE outcomes documentation which attest to the successful 'marketing' of the ideas to the funding authorities. (Delivery of these initiatives is on-going).

Phase 3 is prospective in character and records the strategic thinking and planning associated with the creation of the strategic alliance. After a full year's development of this alliance, Phase 3 records and explicates the delivered (and on-going) products. It is in fact an exposition on the future role and intended performance of the new entity or 'venture' which incorporates Westhill and the University of Birmingham. In particular it involves the University's School of Continuing Studies whose Head made a significant contribution to the generation of the perspectives embraced by the notion of the new **University of Birmingham, Westhill**. This explication represents, therefore, work in progress whilst simultaneously expressing educational practice, which intended to be rooted in conceptual and theoretical knowledge and analysis. It does not claim to represent or describe all of the achieved outcomes, many of which are still in the making as this explication is being written.

The conclusions summarised at Phase 3, will it is anticipated, convince the reader that the creative translation of meanings between the contexts outlined in the project has been demonstrated and evidence of synthesis delivered. It is hoped that the whole will present an understanding of the Westhill - University of Birmingham situation in terms of internal processes of change, characterised by reflexive learning at both the personal and professional levels, thereby meeting the

requirements of DPS 5120 in terms of methodology, scope, reach and the intellectual challenge of project activity.

This account of a change process cannot claim to be impartial and dispassionate though it adheres to the codes of professional practice in the disciplines of social science and educational studies. The explication attempts to minimise the authorial voice, though this statement must be qualified by the demands of a narrative in which the author had a central part to play. The author is referred to as the Deputy Principal of Westhill where a specific authorial presence is required to be acknowledged. Team management, however, is intended as an intrinsic element of the doctoral project and the explication contains examples where members of a team have been responsible to the Deputy Principal for work undertaken as part of the whole project. Where this occurs, teams and then individual members are acknowledged, though for all instances covered by the project, given the nature of whole college and institutional development, this was not always possible. The author alone is responsible for what is claimed and written in this account.

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Phase 1

Issues and Contexts

Part 1 - Lifelong Learning: the challenges

It is already almost half a decade since the 'European Year of Lifelong Learning' was launched. Since then UNESCO has adopted 'lifetime education' as a key objective and the G7 group of industrial nations has declared lifelong learning to be a main strategy in the struggle to combat unemployment. The incoming new labour government in the UK in 1997 declared its priority to be 'education, education, education'. Education has become in effect a nostrum in the growth of the international knowledge economy and represents the cement of the globalising networked society which such commentators as Castells have foreseen as part of all our futures (Castells 1996).

In an era of continuous economic change there is a new and emerging market for all forms of continuing education and professional or vocational competence. New markets for basic, further, higher and continuing education and training are evolving. Where, additionally, stable lifelong employment is now disappearing individuals and communities are faced with the reality of loss of skill and competence. Responsibility for responding to this is frequently laid at the door of the individual. The acquisition of personal competency and skills makes the individual liable for his/her own past, present and future(s). Security of employment is best gained, it is argued, when an individual is equipped with a knowledge base which allows one to learn how to learn. The whole previous basis of individual and collective skills is clearly brought into question by this trend and some of its consequences are to be seen in the economically stagnant and 'redundant' regions of the advanced economies.

If lifelong learning is thought to be a vital ingredient in the solution to these economic and social problems, then it may be helpful to explore briefly some of its conceptual aspects. For example, the awareness of the need for greater social and economic advancement through educational opportunity (see DFEE 1996, and 'The Learning Age' 1998) has been a major factor in forcing through educational change. Following the American experience in the 1960s, higher education in Britain in the 1990s has come to be regarded as a fundamental entitlement for a mass client group rather than as a select privilege for a few. As in the American case (see House 1991), however, we cannot yet be certain that the promises of achievement and success can be met and the hopes of minorities and disadvantaged groups fully realised.

The expanded and new provision is for people well beyond the traditional age and qualifications categories. This is a response which corresponds to the changing nature of employment, leisure and social patterns which are themselves contingent on the evolving division of labour and our understanding of the nature of work and its availability. (See Finegold and Soskice, 1988, Finegold et al., 1992, Gleeson, 1990 and 1993, and Castells 1996).

The arena of work and education is of course a contentious one. We most frequently mean paid work when referring to work but if we were to use the term to encompass the more general notion of **productive life** it would be possible, arguably, to view work as ... "a potentially progressive principle for curricula..." (Spours and Young, 1988). It follows therefore that the nature and organisation of productive life experience is a key structural feature of our social system which distributes educational access unevenly and unequally. This particular issue must serve as a key point of reference for those who wish to develop open systems for work-related learning and will help define new and emergent values which allow a culture of inclusion for the world of higher education on a basis other than specialisation and expanded vocationalism.

What is Lifelong Learning?

It is a truism that Lifelong learning can be taken to reflect all that learning which takes place from the cradle to the grave. Lifelong learning is thus a continuous process which empowers individuals to acquire the knowledge, values, skills and understanding they will require throughout their lifetimes. The argument runs that lifelong learning equips an individual to cope successfully with all those roles and challenges which life and circumstance present. It may be said to be part of a 'providential' perspective within the growth of modern society (Giddens, 1990)

Lifelong learning develops a person's competence throughout his/her life time. Competence includes knowledge, skills, capabilities, experience, contacts, attitudes and values. Lifelong learning is, however, not only the development of knowledge and skills; it includes all learning that takes place in different arenas of life and at different stages of life. It includes formal and informal education and training. Lifelong learning does not refer just to the formal stages of education, it is a continuous development process of individual growth and change. It cannot be encapsulated as a one-off event, or a short course! Lifelong learning provides a person with capabilities to live in a continuously changing world and to cope with the changing society and working life (Gelpi 1986, Dearing 1997).

Lifelong learning concerns personal and social experience throughout a lifetime. However, due to the dislocation engendered by the increasing mismatch and redundancy of peoples' skills in relation to the job market, the focus of lifelong learning is often now on the need for continuous adult re-skilling. Today's working age population finds itself in a new situation. Old skills, occupations and professions with outdated requirements disappear and new professions with new skills and competencies are needed with increasing rapidity. Individuals therefore need continuous updating and upgrading if they are to remain skilled and employable in the modern labour market. Adaptability and flexible specialisation has a premium in such a marketplace.

Lifelong learning aims therefore to develop all elements of human competence. Of course, the relation between and importance of different elements varies at the different ages and stages of individual and social development. Figure 1 below sketches an idealised version of some of the key elements of formal and informal stages of learning which contribute to the continuum of lifelong learning.

Formal, informal and lifelong learning

Fig 1.

Formal		Lifelong		Informal
Pre-School Education Nursery Kindergarten	➡	Pre-dispositions Cultural Capital	⬅	Home
Primary Education	➡	Values	⬅	Leisure
Secondary Education	➡	Attitudes	⬅	Media
Higher Education	➡	Learning Processes	⬅	Personal learning/ Hobbies
Post-graduate Post-experience Continuing	➡	Work experience Social inclusiveness/ Exclusion	⬅	SLD (self-directed Learning
Adult Education	➡	Reflexivity, personal Autonomy	⬅	Social contact and social capital

It can be argued that of all the new skills and competences needed to carry out continuous learning, the most crucial is the ability to continue to learn – i.e. learning how to learn. Various skills and abilities can be identified that influence the individual's capacity to learn and to process information which therefore enable him/her to cope with change. These 'core' competencies for lifelong learning are outlined in table 1. This list of competencies could be said to be the key to the learning of many adults who need to acquire them to be able to carry out personal lifelong learning.

Table 1. Core competencies of lifelong learning

Problem solving, Managing tasks	Focusing on achieving key objectives Using analytical and conceptual thinking Search information and apply techniques Making decisions
Team work	Using logical and rational argument to persuade others Sharing information to achieve goals Understanding the needs of others and building positive relationships
Creativity and Imagination Communication skills	Able to provide new solutions and choices Able to seek alternative solutions Oral and written skills Ability to express oneself verbally Listening skills – counselling skills
Self-awareness	Taking responsibility for one's own learning Dealing with pressures and emotions Knowing one's own mental models Able to adapt mental models to changed circumstances Setting realistic targets for oneself and others Being aware of changes, curiosity
Managing	Retrieving, analysing and synthesising data information and information Application of knowledge to practical tasks
Learning skills	Learning to learn Understanding one's own learning style Understanding learning processes
Personal mastery	Personal vision and values Strong sense of reality Understanding the value of competency Able to move from competence to "capability"

(from Teare, Davies and Sandelands, 1998, p.69)

Even this brief sketch of the context of lifelong learning suggests that there are new needs and roles for higher education. The new methods of learning provide universities and other educational institutions with new roles, new potential and new challenges which are the emerging contexts for the project explicated here.

Challenges for the universities: a market for lifelong learning

The traditional role of the University has been seriously challenged by the explosion of research, knowledge, expertise and sheer intellectually productive capacity of the workplace (Jessup 1991). Knowledge workers, particularly those using modern information and communication technologies are required to cope with the needs of industry and business which demand of them a continuous engagement with learning and knowledge acquisition and renewal. Knowledge and competence is, and it always was, a process of continuous renewal but the difference today is that the professional worker can expect to renew her/his professional knowledge perhaps three or four times at least during a career. For many professional classes there is now a clear need to relate to the sources of updating of knowledge. Potentially therefore, lifelong learners as practitioners within an economically and socially networked society, need a continuously upgraded knowledge base. Such learners are potential students and clients of universities throughout their working lives and beyond. Adult students whose lives are outside the 18-21 year old full-time residential experience are already the majority in the UK and US higher education systems and are the fastest growing segment of the HE market (see Fryer 1997). Adults thus comprise a context and a client base which demands due recognition within the agenda for lifelong learning.

Adults as students

Adult students are often specialists themselves who cannot simply be taught. They do not need education, it can be argued, they need tutoring, guiding, counselling and to be given access to the tools for learning. Competence on the other hand can be viewed as a personal asset in which individuals are willing to invest. It is significant that personal investment in education can increasingly be recognised and accepted in today's international job market. Credits, diplomas, and degrees serve as both signs of personal assets, as well as milestones along the road of lifelong learning. The capacity to transport knowledge and skills from region to region and country to country is fast becoming a necessity in the international and global market-place for labour. (Otter 1997, Teare et al. 1997).

Adult students, therefore, represent a serious challenge to Universities because they are outcomes or result-oriented, are critical and demanding learners and are paying customers for the educational services on offer. Furthermore, they are experienced and often motivated to learn if their learning can be rewarded or recognised at the workplace. (Squires 1987, Field 1988, Forrester, Payne and Ward 1993).

Partnership with working life

The exponential rate of social and economic change of the last two decades has resulted in a major impact on people's working lives. A concomitant feature of this type of change has been the homologous growth in the need for employee competence. Businesses are now looking for new approaches to competence development and human resource management which will share development responsibilities and engagement for the long term. Industry and commerce are looking for partnerships with professional providers of educational services and alliances with those organisations whose core activity is competence development. Partnership development involving industry and universities has been one of the leading strategies of government particularly in the UK in recent years. (Hillman 1996)

The ability to combine knowledge and competence and work on cross-faculty teams with a common objective is an organisational challenge to universities. The capacity and ability of universities to recognise work-related learning is also a challenge in both empirical and theoretical settings. (Lloyd-Langton and Portwood 1994). What follows is an account of the significance of workplace education from the constructivist perspective. This perspective in more than one manifestation, underpins the theme of 'sites of learning', which is a key focus of the overall project described here.

Workplace education: a contextual perspective

Traditionally, education implies the promotion of learning by the transmission of knowledge in circumstances specifically designed for the purpose. The conceptual base for this activity is of course the idea that there exists an available body of knowledge which is of relevance to the individual and is offered in an institutional setting. It is further assumed that such a body of knowledge is capable of being transmitted.

It can be argued, however, that preformulated knowledge is only a part of the knowledge required for enhancing individual and organisational development. Technological development, economic changes within the internal marketplace as well as the need to meet new demands, make organisational and individual flexibility a central issue of concern for any enterprise that wishes to stay ahead of the market. Once acquired, knowledge has therefore to be continuously updated and renewed. At the same time, much of the knowledge needed in order to adjust the organisational structure to meet new demands has to be based on specific experiences within the workplace itself. (Revens 1982, Jessup 1991, Wills 1997). Thus, new and evolving knowledge must somehow be related to specific work or life situations.

Within organisations there are always new ideas (knowledge) being created and individual as well as collective learning takes place continually. The introduction of new technology and changes within an organisation's structure and culture, also affect this ongoing learning process and creation of new knowledge with positive or negative consequences. The workplace as an opportunity for learning and creating knowledge is often ignored when education and learning is under scrutiny. It is often 'beyond the boundary'. This term was used by CLR James in the context of the role and significance of cricket as a cultural phenomenon of colonial history (see James 1963).

A conceptual alternative?

A traditional approach to education has often involved the notion of transmitting knowledge to willing or unwilling receivers. This preformulated knowledge involves the transmitter (the teacher) and the receiver (learner or pupil) as the central players in defining and circumscribing an educational setting. However, where the context is seen as the specific focus of attention, and as potentially providing opportunities for the creation of knowledge, the basic educational concept becomes the possibilities for knowledge to be built or constructed, rather than knowledge as something to be transmitted. (Cobb 1990, Lave 1988). The vehicle for enhancing knowledge is not so much a teacher capable of transmitting knowledge as it is someone capable of designing a learning context that contains or generates desirable learning conditions. The work setting or the community of work experience can be seen as a locus such learning conditions. It is an environment for learning.

If we accept that forms of knowledge differ (Donald 1986) we can legitimately ask how a person's relation to the learning environment can be conceived, considering that it is the capacity to establish a meaningful relation to this environment or context that constitutes the educational task.

One way to view this relationship is to see it as related to task-solving. From this perspective, solving a task implies the acquisition of the necessary knowledge in order to solve the task in question. It is reasonable therefore to view task-solving as an existential project. (Giddens 1991). Learning itself can be considered as task-solving where engagement with authentic tasks in real-life and real-time settings facilitates the deepening of knowledge and understanding. (Bayliss 1993). Social, historical and cultural variables therefore significantly shape what counts as learning and knowledge. They provide the context from which learning, seen as the subjective construction of meaning derived from and yielded by experience, takes place.

Communicative involvement in each other's task-solving strategies is therefore yet another aspect to be considered. In other words, an educational enterprise necessarily has to consider the contextual conditions for learning with regard to its interactive and collective experience, as well as those emanating from and impacting on the individual.

To return to our theme, an educational perspective on the work context can be developed by focusing on the learner's active construction of knowledge, where the opportunity for task-solving in terms of action as well as interpretation constitutes the main condition for learning.

The constructivist approach

This conceptual approach to learning could be summed up as a focus on learning and the construction of knowledge with emphasis on the term construction. The implication being that learning and the development of knowledge is viewed from the perspective of the learner as the primary actor responsible for the production of specific knowledge. (Lofberg 1989). Constructivist educational theories, however, highlight the importance of learners engaging in the intentional pursuit of their own goals or tasks and the role of social and collective interactions in learning processes. (Hawkins 1993)

The contexts of learning: work and organisations

The conditions under which people learn in work or in work-related activities can be approached from a number of different perspectives. However, with a focus on the educational frame of reference outlined above, the perspective selected must be on these conditions as a context of learning. Organisations themselves of course can be theorised as learning systems in which the organisations' capacity for affording continuous learning is explored (Garratt 1994, Teare 1998). What learning conditions does the work situation then afford? How learners transform a complex work situation into an opportunity that offers relevant support to the learner's knowledge-building activity may yield surprising results. (Lofberg 1989, Davies and Armstrong 1998).

Conceptually it is necessary to approach a study of work organisations as suppliers of elements that can be used by the learner in order to establish a learning context. These elements will range from the physical environment to the social networks involved in organisations with different workers viewing the same work conditions from their specific perspective. Taking the learning context as a point of departure this approach, it has been suggested, has fundamental implications for the development of educationally relevant knowledge. (Lofberg 1989, Bayliss 1993).

It seems appropriate to seek theoretical explanations to the type of questions raised by the contextual/constructivist approach to education based on the assumption that interaction constitutes the learning individual, in its social context. By this it is meant that learning is not only a question of acquiring knowledge, it is also a question of being part of constituting the person as a phenomenon in its own right; the implication being that development is not simply a repetition of a distinct process that has been going on for generations with similar but different individuals. Rather, each person participating in a learning process is also participating in the continual emergence of the human being as an individual and social being, by

actively constructing and creating his or her specific relation to the environment. This process could be referred to as **praxis**.

Knowledge in this scenario is seen as the product of goal-directed and functional interaction with the environment as the basic process. Knowledge, therefore, cannot be conceived as an accurate representation of the world as it is, in any absolute manner. Knowledge must rather be conceived as conscious awareness of the environment, which is composed of goal-directed activity. It is not within the scope of this paper to argue in detail for the basic philosophical and psychological issues involved in this perspective. However, from the educational point of view discussed earlier and the need to develop an educational approach that enhances employees' capacity to formulate new knowledge based on specific work-related and life experiences, the above theoretical approach to the emergence and development of knowledge seems to reveal a central theme for further investigation. Formulation of tasks and the idea of solving tasks becomes crucial. Thus the construction of knowledge can be understood at least in part as evolving as a consequence of task-formulation and task-solving, whilst at the same time constructing the environment so as to afford more and more diversified goal-directed activities. Taking up this point Berger and Luckmann (1966) present an interesting line of reasoning in order to understand how social reality evolves with human beings, in interaction with each other, as constructors of reality! And it is surely interesting to note that Ralf Dahrendorf, a noted sociological analyst of the 1960's has recently suggested a need for the creation of an ethnography of reality. (Dahrendorf 1999).

The above concepts and theoretical approaches reveal learning and the construction of knowledge as very complex phenomena and it is easy to understand the appeal to the educationalist of the more clear-cut theories on learning based on the idea of interaction between two distinct elements: the environment and the person or on 'behaviourist' or 'cognitive' approaches to learning (Bayliss 1993). However, these theories evade the real issues involved when educators intervene in the real process of knowledge construction. That is to say people always are involved, both

individually and collectively. Therefore reordering the educational frame of reference to a contextual and constructivist concept is not only a question of changing educational practice. It is also a question of meeting the challenge of participating in the development of educationally relevant theories of learning and knowledge construction. It may involve the bringing together of theory and practice to produce new understandings which in turn influence both and in so doing is revealed as praxis.

The experienced/empirical world as part of the learning context

In exploring the impact of experience as the learning context there are two aspects to be stressed:

- the social individual as 'bridge-builder' between different forms of lived experience, and
- the construction of artifacts as containers of knowledge and tools for the construction of knowledge.

Basically, the argument is that the environment affords opportunities to act. This affordance (Gibson 1979, Reed 1993) does not exist other than as a relationship between a mentally active human being and the environment in terms of what actually is offered. An affordance = the capacity to act on and in the environment which = chances to act which = a scheme of action.

In fact this can be viewed as a process of separation. In the beginning, the environment affords or offers elementary perceptual acts - that is to say, we experience and perceive events in the real world and we seek to give them meaning, that is, to understand and control them. With increased knowledge, new environmental affordances are identified, where knowledge can be regarded as the bridge between experienced phenomena, revealing new and more complex activities thrown up as it were by the environment. Knowledge is thus not only a question of building bridges between affordances, but also a question of building bridges so that

the individual person becomes materialised as a distinct phenomenon that can act upon the environment. (Mankind makes history, it was observed by Marx but not always under conditions of its own making!)

The argument here runs - it is unique for human beings to construct symbolic artifacts. Artifacts can be regarded as environmental affordances constructed by people themselves, combining specifically identified affordances and knowledge of these affordances into specific products facilitating intended activities. Considering that artifacts can include everything from technical products to the production of language, including such products as norms, values, rituals and institutions, it is easy to see how this production can come to be the material base on which social life is constructed, as pointed out by Berger and Luckmann (1966).

In order to try to build valid theoretical knowledge about this complex process of interaction between people and their environments, as well as between individuals and collectivities, it seems central to try to describe how and in what way affordances and artifacts appear in specific settings, and in particular in educational ones.

The study of education of course involves not only theory; it is also a field of practice. Educational objectives are often formulated which are to be achieved through forms of professional and pedagogic practice. The pedagogical question is not a problem of presenting knowledge, but a problem of designing and supporting a learning context that provides opportunities for learning.

In this section of the explication the intention has been to raise some of the central issues involved if we take conscious change in the learning context as a point of departure for developing an educational frame of reference. However, after this brief glance at the problematics involved, it seems apparent that a context orientated educational frame of reference must have as a central concept the idea of the social individual's own construction of knowledge in interaction consciously with the environment.

It is suggested that applicable theoretical knowledge could be generated by viewing the individual as constructor of knowledge and the environment as a context of meaning in accordance with the task-solving activities afforded by this environment. It is also suggested that the practical, didactical issues raised by a contextual and constructivist educational frame of reference should be a question of developing tools for critical analysis of the learner's (or employee's) learning context. It is, after all, in the concrete contract between the employee and the specific working conditions of most people's lives that learning and the development of knowledge takes place. Building upon these perspectives, the particular focus of this project is to conceptualise and record key aspects experience-related learning, including that gained in the workplace and throughout life and to explore the new roles available to universities consequent upon these changes.

The workplace and learning.

A fundamental issue to be explored in relation to the new role of universities concerns change in what Bruffee, (1995), has called, the construction of the authority of knowledge. What counts as learning and knowing within this perspective can be seen as contested terrain and is subject to challenge over time. The argument will be developed later in this explication in relation to a series of specific educational initiatives aimed at non-traditional, adult learners in the 1970s and 1980s. These led the author to focus in the 1990s on key developments related to 'action learning', applied to learning in both community settings and the workplace as **vital and emergent sites of non-traditional learning**. (Davies 1995)

A central theme is that aspects of recent educational experience can be characterised as moving historically from closed to open systems and from a monopoly of knowledge (held by the academic disciplines and their practitioners) to a shared and collaborative system of knowledge production. (Kaye 1992, Brown 1990, Honebein et al 1993).

The transitions referred to are intended to develop an understanding of how learning opportunities (mainly associated with adult learning) have been focused on content-laden, closed and 'objectivist' views of what counts as learning, and have later come to be focused more on the processes of learning, on multiple levels of experience, on open systems of access and on the recognition of learning achievement whenever and wherever it has occurred. This has been referred to above in theoretical terms as the contextual and constructivist approach. The sub-textual themes through which the narrative evolves, however, are necessarily empirically and descriptively framed and embrace a number of initiatives and perspectives. Their wider educational and sociological contexts embrace a range of innovations which have been 'maturing' since the 1980s.

These include:

- the growth of learner centred knowledge and action learning;
- the development of open systems of accreditation and the movement from 'closed' to 'open' knowledge systems and from pedagogy to andragogy;
- the development of a national credit framework;
- the growth of credit accumulation and transfer (CATS) within higher education;
- modular courses and the unitisation of the curriculum;
- growth of independent learning opportunities;
- accreditation of previous learning and of experiential learning;
- a focus on learning outcomes (learners) rather than on inputs (teachers);

- recognition of work and work experience as a key source of learning;
- recognition of learning communities as 'sites of learning'.

These innovations are now extensive and pervasive in British higher education (Robertson 1994, Jary and Parker 1998) and it is beyond the scope of this project to explore them in detail. However, they point up the emergence of some key themes which have shaped both the conceptual approach to the overall project described here and can be said to have 'saturated' the empirical research and development activity reported in Phase 2 of the project which follows. These themes include the following:

1. The implications for the use and application of practitioner knowledge when it is acquired 'off-campus', and when it is acquired by non-traditional students in higher education who include Access students and work-based learners.
2. The explication of the notion of 'sites of learning', where credit and modular systems especially, sponsor innovation in learning.
3. The idea of a credit framework and a qualifications framework at both regional and national levels.
4. The significance of experiential and action learning for institutional providers (such as universities) who might find the methodologies alien.
5. The use of APEL (accreditation of prior, experiential learning) particularly in relation to work-place learning.
6. The emergence of new knowledge frameworks utilising action learning methods.

It seems clear that the world of the workplace, the professions and industry has already re-shaped the work and significance of the academy. Industry is restructuring in networks with members of different sizes and types and universities must increasingly meet the competition, efficiency and quality requirements of industry. It seems clear that to meet customer needs outside their existing and traditional core areas of work and competence universities need partners. This has promoted a networking structure where universities and educational institutions form a compact for development or a network for learning provision. These networks throw into relief the need for new roles for universities and the significance of the evolving but as yet incomplete lifelong learning infrastructure.

Lifelong learning infrastructure

Lifelong learning requires an infrastructure containing providers and distributors of education, training and learning; common principles and policies; accreditation systems; degrees and diplomas; and methods of transferring learning into credits. This list is not an exhaustive account but it identifies some very key elements.

Lifelong learners are becoming more mobile; learning does not stop at national borders. In practice, a credible and useable infrastructure implies that universities agree upon basic rules for recognition and credits, and the principles of credit transfer. They also agree to cooperate in providing competence development and learning for both individuals and organisations (Ojala 1993, 1994, InCCA 1998).

The infrastructure for lifelong learning forms a common framework with common principles and policies for providing learning opportunities, assessing learning outcomes, accrediting learning achievements and transferring credit. The elements of this infrastructure include the following:

- study and learning modules;
- flexible combinations of modules;
- individual study/learning plans;

- individual learning styles recognised as valid;
- many providers and many modes of delivery;
- common principles for assessing and awarding credit;
- transfer of credits;
- industry-university co-operation and networks.

Competition

The market potential of expanded educational services for lifelong learning will attract competition which will not only come from inside the educational sector itself. (Mayo and Lank 1994). The learning needs of adult students are increasingly becoming a major target of other users and providers of communication time. The development of new technology promotes such growth and multimedia expansion worldwide has brought publishers, media companies, broadcasting companies and telecommunications companies into the educational market. International media are looking for applications of all kinds to generate revenues from their multi-billion global investments in multi-media.

Technology provides a distribution channel also to non-European and non-American providers of higher education services. Universities and other educational institutions are, therefore, in a new situation. Competition among themselves has been a relatively minor issue for European universities thus far, but they are facing new competitors, especially from the commercial media, which is expert in attracting people for a great deal of their free and learning time. The emerging technical applications will generate other providers, as yet unknown, with opportunities to occupy the potential lifelong learning and adult education market.

Meeting the challenges

Universities have to learn to provide quality, to achieve customer satisfaction, to guarantee simultaneously high quality and cost efficiency. Universities can use the same strategies as businesses thus focusing on core activities and core competencies,

re-engineering processes, developing effective networks, promoting teamwork and operating effectively in a fast moving market environment. It is also evident that competition requires quality. Companies that have learned to listen to customer needs and quickly meet them are the winners in a competitive marketplace.

Meeting the quality demands

Education can now be conceptualised as a service (see Courtney 1992 and Eraut 1994). Standardised study programmes and degrees have been promoted and customer satisfaction as a quality measurement, which has had previously only a minor role will be predominant in the future. Working organisations are more and more partners with which universities can share objectives rooted in network-based competence development. The role of the educational institution should focus therefore on developing a vision, on co-ordinating provision and on strategic leadership and brokerage of learning opportunities. According to Sallis (1992), quality inheres in processes, not in individual tasks and jobs, and quality requires continuous improvement of these processes.

Learning needs vary, and therefore so do methods and processes of learning. Many companies and working organisations are already using the notion of individual learning styles (see Honey and Mumford 1992) to encourage employees to learn. When the focus is on learning, furthermore, rather than on institutionalised education, it is a major challenge for universities to learn to assess competence (Bayliss 1993).

Possibilities for the future: towards open systems

Educational institutions have long been very much closed systems. Being part of existing multi-dimensional networks means that universities and educational institutions may interact in different directions. Being customer-focused and proactive means that they should be able to be sensitive to changes and new demands. As a result of all this, they cannot continue to develop as closed systems;

instead they need to give attention to open systems which involve interactive relationships with many partners (Wheatley 1992, Capra 1983, Teare, Davies and Sandelands 1998).

From faculties to resource centres

If we accept the necessity for open systems, the university itself should have an organisational structure which allows continuous development of its own core competencies. Departments could for example, build up flexible curricula and recommended paths for degrees and diplomas from the modules provided by resource pools for different customer groups. Faculty members should be able to form problem-based, target-oriented or client-oriented teams combining the resources of core competence pools. In these and other ways a myriad of opportunities for learning could be created.

Decentralisation

Centralised administration of higher education in many countries in Europe and elsewhere does not allow universities the flexibility and speed of reaction they need to meet customer needs. Universities, it can be asserted, should have enough autonomy to set their own vision, goals and ways to achieve those goals finding a balance between the needs of stability and continuity for students who face instability and continuous change. The need for increasing effectiveness can be achieved through modernising and 'industrialising' the available education and training services and through the use of information and communication technology there is surely an inevitability about this type of change. The requirement for a customer focus that can be promoted by providing education and training services according to market needs, and by personalising all these services has yet to be recognised across the piece in the world of higher education. There is no doubt that tension will arise as providers seek to identify and reconcile these sometimes contradictory requirements.

Strategies in Lifelong Learning

To become more customer-focused and to meet quality requirements, universities should take an active role in defining competence development and learning needs in the future. Universities can establish cluster -, network- or industry-based groups with members from industry and academia that analyse and co-ordinate competence development needs and provision of learning opportunities. Competence can thus be made to articulate with academic outcomes and achievements.

Industry and working life

Industry has for some considerable time been looking for new approaches to competence development and to support employees' lifelong learning (Wills 1993). There exists opportunity for universities to participate in developing a vision of working life as a source of learning. Real partnership in this respect could conceivably herald a new era for universities. Co-operation could take the form of joint institutes, joint programmes, joint projects, and reciprocal-membership within and organisations. If this is not accepted as a future prospect the 'corporate university' could develop apace leaving conventional universities in their wake! (Wills 1998)

From Education to Learning

Universities are increasingly recognising the need to be 'learning institutions' and providers of a wide variety of opportunities for lifelong learning. The learning institution analyses future competence needs and learning opportunities, communicates them to students and provides the conceptual articulation of learning to lived experience. The learning institution gives lifelong learners a support network. In addition to acquiring new knowledge, skills and competence, learning organisations must also implement them. Business organisations are clearly

interested in organisational learning and are perhaps their best exponents! There is however, a need to improve the capacity and willingness of organisations to support, benefit, accelerate and generate lifelong learning. If universities are to be experts in lifelong learning , then they should, by extension, be experts in lifelong organisational learning.

The foregoing section represents a framework of ideas and concepts which it is claimed have 'saturated' the remaining parts and phases of this project. The creation of the strategic alliance, which is the focus of the next part, between Westhill and the University of Birmingham was predicated on both the resolution of Westhill's historic financial 'problem' and on the realisation of its mission. This includes the delivery of creative higher education and lifelong learning to those excluded by virtue of their beliefs, faith or circumstances.

Part 2 - Creating a 'Strategic Alliance': the role of the Centre for Lifelong Learning

All historical accounts of reality represent a selection of evidence from the totality of what is available. All explanation, similarly, represents interpretative accounts of complex and many-sided reality. What follows is necessarily a partial and highly mediated account of a process which is by no means completed at the time of writing. It does not claim to be comprehensive or definitive, but it does seek to be an objective narrative of some key events and issues with which the writer engaged in an intellectually critical way over a sustained period of time. Furthermore the account, it is claimed, is rooted within the framework of ideas explored in part 1 and it is those ideas which substantiate the claim to the discovery and emergence of a 'dynamic curriculum', itself a milestone on the road to the creation of a 'network of learning'. It is these last two conceptual clusters which give meaning to the creation of the strategic alliance.

Notwithstanding the temptation to uncover levels of meaning in a process, it remains a fact that a certain primacy has to be given to material facts and forces. On taking up post as Deputy Principal in September 1997 with a new Principal on the same day, it appeared that the College was in good financial health, as had been asserted in the previous June at the appointments panel. It soon became apparent that the picture was less optimistic than had appeared to be the case. To abbreviate a long story, it became clear before Christmas 1997 that if nothing were done the College cash reserves (approaching £2M) would run out by the year 2001 at which point the College's long term investments of £1.4M and its substantial land holdings (valued at that time at £18.8M) would be required to be spent in order to maintain institutional stability and the employment of the circa 120 college staff. Such a prospect was, to put it at its mildest, undesired by all of the parties involved.

Appendix 1 – document 1 documents the financial and strategic issues faced by the College by February 1998. Two clear lines of development had emerged by that point in time. First the College sought to secure long term viability through an academic alliance with a larger partner in order to secure a better or more secure financial future. Second, the College should grow by diversifying its products and services into markets not so directly affected by public funding. This latter avenue had been opened for development when the University of Birmingham (UOB) had accepted and approved a range of innovative accreditation and APEL procedures drafted by the Deputy Principal (DP) who had responsibility for academic development and validation.

The following summary paper, written by the DP, encapsulated at that time the key issues and questions facing Westhill from the perspective of academic accreditation.

WESTHILL COLLEGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

A New Prospective Statement for Accredited Courses with the University of Birmingham

Key Issues

- *The College's portfolio of accredited programmes is no longer adequate for future developments and growth in student numbers.*
- *The College must address a fall in revenue contingent upon loss of funded student FTEs. It must ensure more income or more student registrations, or both.*
- *The original presumption of accreditation, on a 5 year to 5 year basis, is no longer appropriate to the time scale for change required by the College.*
- *The scope for accreditation – focussed upon specified programmes, limited by the concept of 'primacy' militates against the College's need for flexibility and responsiveness to the various 'markets' it must address simultaneously.*

- *There is no existing recognition of the need for University accreditation to cover part-time, modular and open programmes.*
- *A strategic change into modular and part-time programmes is needed and will be on of the justifications put to HEFCE for additional student numbers.*

Key Objectives for the College

- *To change the focus of the Accreditation Agreement with the University from one of primacy in 'course/award/programme validation' to a more appropriate focus upon 'institutional accreditation' of the College itself.*
- *To extend the range of approved awards offered by Westhill under the Accreditation Agreement to include modular part-time modes of study, distance modes at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels and approach research rewards.*

Key Assumptions for the Future Accreditation Process with the University

- *A generic accreditation framework is required which will allow the College to offer accredited programmes to meet its recruitment and funding targets.*
- *There is growth available in the sector and (following the Dearing Report) expansion is possible without detriment to the University as the accrediting institution.*
- *At programme and course level, greater autonomy to approve and modify the offer to students, within the agreed framework.*
- *Open enrolment for part-time students at level 1 within the credit-based modular scheme.*

Specific Developments Required

1. *A Modular Scheme at Degree Level*

A comprehensive awards programme yielding certificates, diplomas and degree level qualifications in Combined Studies, based upon academic credit and the principles of modularity.

2. *Modular Postgraduate Awards at Master Level in Applied Education, Training and Professional Development; greater autonomy for research supervision.*

3. *Off-Campus Provision and Outreach Programmes with Partners in Provision.*

4. *AP(E)L – Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning.*

5. *Work-based Learning (WBL) and Continuing Professional Development (CPD).*

6. *Overseas Collaborative Provision – especially in association with the Selly Oak Federation of Colleges.*

Having begun to define a financial and academic agenda, the College put itself into a series of risk analysis situations and made a series of future projections concerning the various market places in which it operated. A key to the diversification agenda was the proposal to the Governing Body and Trustees of the College for the establishment of the Centre for Lifelong Learning (CLL). It was noted at the time (Appendix 1, document 2 p3) that "...within its chosen new market place, the College's CLL School will have to fight hard to secure recognition and develop the commercial tenacity required to secure accounts against competition. The breadth and flexibility of the product offer that may be required will be taxing. The College has a strong conviction that it can handle such links." An ambitious business plan was developed which was closely linked to the emerging new activities which were the responsibility of the Deputy Principal (see Appendix 1, document 3).

In spite of such optimism the strategy that emerged placed at its very centre the notion of a new strategic alliance which could give long term substance and longevity for a worthwhile future. It is necessary, therefore, to relate some of the story of the emergence of the strategic alliance which is at the heart of this particular narrative. However, it should be borne in mind that the alliance is a shaping and defining context for the evolution of the dynamic curriculum and it is this latter development, and its emerging significance for the conceptualisation and practical development of course provision, which is the subject of the project. In attempting to formulate action plans which addressed the need for growth and change as absolute imperatives for institutional survival, a new approach to the curriculum was recognised as a necessity. It was clear that the widening participation agenda and lifelong learning challenges (see Phase I, part 1) could only be developed and delivered with the help of a new approach to curriculum thinking and delivery. Initially a team, led by the College Deputy Principal, focussed on developing a form of 'outreach' which came under the rubric of 'sites of learning'. This particular formulation deserves some attention as it was in itself a challenge to a range of unstated assumptions covering devolved and distributed models of learning and it led to the need to conceptualise and plan the College's future in terms of its mission for teaching and learning (ie its curriculum) in respect of the impending need for a strategic alliance with a bigger and very different partner.

The strategic alliance and the new approach to the College's curriculum evolved as interlocking themes in tandem. The material impact of unsuccessful bidding, partly as a consequence of earlier poor Ofsted results, meant that drastic solutions were needed. The College Principal wrote in February 1998 that the outcome of financial changes produced a need for the College to enhance its current income by circa £550,000 per year. Thus "...Expressed in another way (he wrote) I believe that such a quantity represents too large a gap to be bridged in the years available by the development of the Centre for Lifelong Learning, though it is important to understand that I still place initial strategic importance on that development for the College's future whatever form that may take". (See Appendix 1, document 2). By early 1998 the College's senior management team had set the course for developing a strategic alliance (with four possible partners, the 'winner' eventually being the University of Birmingham) and simultaneously had affirmed the need for the Centre for Lifelong Learning and a reformed curriculum.

What follows is an account of the key aspects of the curriculum strategy which Westhill envisaged would help shape the strategic alliance. It was written by the Deputy Principal as an attempt to crystallise the specifically curricular implications of the proposed strategic alliance.

TOWARDS THE CURRICULUM STRATEGY

The key curricular aims of the strategic alliance were outlined as aiming:

- to secure the long term viability of the College and its relationship with the University in order that it may deliver its mission in the changed circumstances in which it finds itself;
- to diversify the College's activity base, so as to ensure a viable and intellectually coherent curriculum offer;

- to re-structure the College's academic programmes in order to achieve growth and sustainable development of the courses portfolio; and
- to seek within the long term alliance programme growth and continued quality of the learning experience.

The situation was assessed at the time in terms of the key curricular and educational assets of the College which were stated to include the following:

- a distinctive (and relatively unique) mission;
- a national reputation for excellence in a cluster of academic areas;
- unique specialisms in Islamic Studies, Dance Education (with the Royal Ballet) and Theological Studies;
- extensive community and Birmingham City links;
- commitment to shared learning with practitioners in the workplace, community and academic environments;
- demonstrable commitment to quality through the existing accreditation with the University of Birmingham.

The College, it was asserted, had made considerable progress from an historic over-reliance on initial teacher education. Diversification at Westhill was proceeding under:

- the structural arrangements out of ITT agreed with HEFCE and TTA;
- modularity across College programmes;
- the accreditation of a part-time Combined Studies Award Programme and of a Modular Masters Degree by the University of Birmingham;
- the development of work-based learning through the College's Centre for Lifelong Learning;
- the College's participation in the 'University for Industry' and lifelong learning programmes within its region;

- collaboration with other providers of HE including 'learning communities' which may be neighbourhood based or professionally and vocationally located with employers.

However, as the College Academic Plan and the deliberations of the College Management showed, major constitutional change involving institutional re-structuring in addition to changes to academic programmes was required to ensure viability and delivery of its mission.

The specific curriculum strategy involved a restructuring of college-wide programmes and embraced four key elements:

- (i) A developing **portfolio of courses and academic programmes**.
- (ii) The implementation of a **Business Plan** with financial targets and performance criteria.
- (iii) The establishment of the **Centre for Lifelong Learning** whose key strategy was (and remains) to diversify the College's core programmes through innovative work-based and off-campus provision.
- (iv) The development of 'shared-learning' programmes, which represent Westhill's ability to contribute substantially to the **widening of participation** for socially excluded ethnic and faith communities in Birmingham and beyond.

The programme as has been mentioned also involved a business plan (see Appendix 1).

The key elements of this plan focused on:

- need for 1000 MASN in total and a growth strategy;
- the planning process and its critical path and timescale;

- the relationship of phase 1 (MASN allocation and new activity, eg, CLL etc) to phase 2 (alliance).

Returning to the portfolio of courses and academic programmes, the College's current portfolio of courses and programmes then comprised degrees and awards of the University of Birmingham delivered by two schools and the Centre for Lifelong Learning. The School of Professional Studies was concerned with undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision for initial teacher training, INSET, Community and Youth Work Training, Church Education and Religious Education. The School of Arts and Humanities offered undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in humanities, applied theology, and inter-disciplinary studies. The CLL had a remit to devise, develop and deliver innovative programmes, covering continuing education, CPD, work-based learning and partnerships with local and regional learning communities.

The new programmes it was agreed would sponsor further development through:

- the adoption of modular curriculum structures for all awards;
- more flexible accreditation procedures and the use of APEL;
- use of more diverse delivery methods, eg. open learning, distance tuition, computer assisted learning, internet-based tuition and courseware and work-based learning;
- the development of a College-wide commitment to student and achievement centred learning and qualification.

The Centre for Lifelong Learning (CLL)

The emerging significance of the CLL can be seen as part of the College's adoption of the view that the purpose of all post-compulsory education - further, higher and adult-continuing - can best be understood as the creation of a learning society. (A title adopted by Dearing). In order to go beyond the view that much institutionalised education remains locked into existing structures for delivery, Westhill set up a Centre for Lifelong Learning (CLL) whose purpose was to accommodate the flexible learning

careers and personal learning agendas required in modern society and which could help the College meet the challenges of lifelong learning outlined in Phase 1 of this project.

The CLL was intended to focus primarily on the needs of mature students, of whom Westhill had many. The following points summarised the national position (recorded by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) in 1998) as a context for the development of the CLL:

- there were almost three quarters of a million students aged over 25 in higher education institutions (42% of the total);
- fewer than half of all students in HE institutions were aged 21 and under;
- almost exactly half of the students who were studying for undergraduate degrees, diplomas and certificates were aged over 21, and more than a third were aged 26 and over;
- many mature students were engaged in postgraduate study, the large majority of whom were following taught courses in professional subject areas;
- additionally there were almost a million registrations annually on professional and personal development courses which do not lead to a formal qualification.

The CLL at Westhill was remitted by the College to provide:

- flexibility for learners on campus;
- recognition for work-based learners;
- flexible approaches to skills development;
- institutional strategies for supporting lifelong learning;
- accreditation opportunities and recognition on non-traditional learning achievements;
- open and distance learning opportunities;
- a major APEL scheme allowing credit-based learning to develop on a significant scale for previous learning.

The key objectives of the CLL were to bring together into a new unit, a range of professional and developmental work which was capable of generating new activity by both responding to and creating new markets for education and training. The concrete business objectives for the CLL in 1998-99 were and are:

- take up of Westhill accreditation services by 6 large companies;
- take up of management development and learning by 40 small companies;
- take up of management education and learning by 100 individuals;
- establishment of a brokerage service offering information, help and guidance based on ICT;
- testing the provision of management education and learning materials in an IT format;
- supporting learning and stimulating demand by promoting the use of local learning centres or 'sites of learning' starting initially with the OLRC (Orchard Learning Resources Centre) at Westhill.

The second and equal emphasis of the centre was to be on shared learning and the widening of participation focussed on a network of learning partnerships.

Westhill has 'specialised' in recent times in developing and serving a 'community sector' whose education needs have lain beyond the boundaries of the University campus. The origins of this work lie in Westhill's provision of teachers for inner-city schools, the training of community and youth workers, the provision of INSET and CPD for educational workers and para-professionals in schools, the provision of counselling and guidance training services, the identification of the educational needs of major faith groups and ethnic minorities and the conscious attempt to combat the effects of racism and social exclusion. The strategic alliance will, it was anticipated, mandate the CLL to carry this work forward into an environment where the words 'community' and 'partnership' are likely to be given increased importance.

By early 1998 the University of Birmingham had approved schemes of accreditation put forward by the DP for Westhill so that the College could develop new partnership

provision with off-campus providers of education and training. Building upon the concepts of the 'learning organisation' and the 'learning community', Westhill is now forging links with further education and community education providers. Such links are not franchises, but are partnerships for progression where students are able to secure opportunities for further and advanced study. They are in fact the 'nodes' of the network of learning which was evolving in response to the need for a more open, context-based and constructivist curriculum capable of expressing the dynamic learning requirements of non-traditional learners.

These partnerships were intended to enhance the College's options to take up some of the recommendations of the Dearing Report (1997), including:

- the development of HE/FE links and collaboration;
- the extension of 'regional' co-operation;
- widening of access and participation through a participation strategy;
- the further development of student choice.

As a consequence of this development agenda being brought into a conjunction with the much older Westhill tradition a specific commitment was made by Westhill to the regional Muslim communities. The West Midlands is the second (outside London) largest concentration of ethnic minorities in the UK. Additional places it was hoped would be available through the widening participation programmes being sponsored by the HE funding bodies, so that Westhill could extend opportunities for personal and professional learning for individuals who are socially excluded. Muslim women, for example, accessing professional areas such as social work, youth and community work and childcare were a specific focus. Westhill has growing relationships with Islamic 'alternative' or non-institutional HE providers in Greater Manchester and Leicester. Westhill intended therefore to develop joint provision at sub-degree level with these learning organisations when places became available. The CLL was to play a significant role in this development and was to win funds under HEFCE widening participation bids later in 1998 and early in 1999. (See Appendix 4)

The College Deputy Principal drew up the 'prospectus' for the CLL and submitted it for approval and funding to the College Governors and Trustees in the Spring Term of 1998. It was accepted whole-heartedly and funding was provided for a two year development phase. A sum of £300,000 was allocated by the Trustees (Appendix 2 contains the CLL Prospectus, and the Business Plan for its development and implementation). What follows is the first report given by the Deputy Principal in May 1998 to the College Governors which attempted to conceptualise the role of the CLL within the emerging alliance.

Report for Governors' Working Party

David Davies, Deputy Principal

Centre for Lifelong Learning

Context

The Westhill Trustees and Governors have invested a sum of £300,000 towards the establishment of a new direction for the College. The Centre for Lifelong Learning is intended to be an important part of Westhill's contribution towards a raft of changes which are now underway within both education and the wider society.

There is much talk currently of the "learning society", however, going beyond some of this rhetoric there is surely reality in the widely felt need for new approaches to learning. The College is now part of a mass system of higher education, which by the start of the new millennium will deliver levels of education that will stand comparison with many across the world. Westhill's new Centre is intended to stimulate and encourage the growth of new learning opportunities wherever they occur, but especially those involving partnerships with learners who belong to a variety of communities not previously reached by Westhill.

Key activities of the Centre for Lifelong Learning (CLL)

The key activities of the Centre will facilitate access to learning for previously excluded individuals or groups, including those in the workplace, which may be far beyond the physical bounds of the College. The core activities will include promoting and marketing learning, brokering learning opportunities, providing information and guidance, commissioning educational development, accrediting and assuring the quality of course provision with which the College is associated and developing the educational principles of personal, professional and workplace learning. The Centre will devise and deliver a range of innovative programmes which are relevant to the vision of lifelong learning and which will help implement the College's educational mission in new ways.

Initial Programmes

The Centre will take responsibility for the following teaching and learning programmes and activities from September 1998 onwards:

- 'Learning for Life' - a part time modular awards programme based upon the Combined Studies Awards Scheme approved by the University of Birmingham. Some 26 courses/modules will be offered in 1998-99.*
- Work-based learning - a programme of personal and professional development for industry-based learners.*
- Israel B.Phil and Masters Degree Distance Learning Programmes.*
- Credit mapping and credit rating industry-based training courses which will recognise previous learning and experience.*

Staffing

The Centre has College approval for the appointment of 4 staff in the first instance; namely:

Director of the Centre

Programme Manager (Industry)

Programme Manager (Learning Communities)

Centre Administrator/Secretary

The following appointments have been made:

Director – (A. Other) BA MSc

Ms A is qualified in law and management studies and was Course Team Leader for higher education provision at East Birmingham College. She has been responsible for the delivery of management development courses to several local manufacturing companies, including Rover. In addition she has held responsibilities for co-ordinating various European funded projects and has chaired the Northfield Citizens Advice Bureau. Anita takes up her post on 30 June 1998.

The Centre for Lifelong Learning is essentially an enterprise unit within the College and is expected to utilise the existing resources of the College in addition to its own to achieve its objectives and targets. The Director is expected to be entrepreneurial in the approach and methods used to generate activity, resources and income for the College. She is expected to develop new initiatives in order to deliver strategic change for the College within measurable time periods and to plan and manage budgets in accordance with business strategy.

Programme Manager (Industry) – (B. Other) BA Dip. Prof. Devel.

Ms B has joined Westhill from Dorset County Council where she co-ordinated a project to develop a range of awards for the Education Welfare Service Profession. She has qualifications involving planning and marketing and has worked on the development of a range of higher education awards which use competence-based learning and assessment. Justine began her work at the end of April and is currently preparing brochures and materials to launch the 'Learning for Life' programme in September. In addition she is drafting a booklet on credit mapping work-based learning on behalf of the Centre.

Centre Administrator/Secretary – (C. Other)

Ms C has joined us on a temporary basis from Cadbury Ltd where she was a secretary/administrator. She has worked in a customer oriented environment including marketing, sales and project development. Marian's post will supply active administrative and development support for all members of the Centre.

Programme Manager (Learning Communities)

This post is vacant at this point in time and is expected to be filled during the next semester.

Westhill Staff and the CLL

Although there are dedicated Centre for Lifelong Learning staff, it is the expectation of the College Senior Management Team that a range of existing staff will work with and through the CLL. Currently the following staff are involved in CLL activities:

Co-ordinator for Professional Development (CPD)

Co-ordinator of Overseas Programmes (Israel)

Conference Office staff

Staff Development Officer

External Membership

The CLL has adopted a practice of offering collaborative fellowships in order to encourage the growth of partnerships and alliances. The following have been agreed:

Fellows

Professor Richard Teare, Oxford Brookes University

Professor Richard Dealtry, International Management Centre, Buckingham

Dr Gaie Davidson Burnett, Director of Research and Statistics, Universities Council for the Admission of Students (UCAS)

Revered Dr Stephen Sizer, Vicar, Virginia Water, Surrey

Westhill Alliances - A role for the CLL

Starting Points

During the last 3 years (up to and including 1998) the College has been under constant audit of all its systems and procedures. In that time it has:

- (a) Achieved and sustained development surpluses each year.*
- (b) Fulfilled all essential obligations under the Estates Strategy.*
- (c) Developed its full accreditation status from the University of Birmingham in new directions.*
- (d) Restructured its profile of academic programmes.*
- (e) Completed, with its Selly Oak partners, the construction of a 4,500 m² OLRC.*
- (f) Established a college-wide IT network delivering high quality MIS data.*
- (g) Shifted the balance of its undergraduate programmes from teacher training to BA work.*
- (h) Significantly developed its research and publications profile.*
- (i) Developed new part-time undergraduate and masters programmes.*
- (j) Established a Centre for Lifelong Learning.*

Objectives

In order to secure its long term viability and to deliver its distinctive mission, the College is required to diversify its activity base and take forward the achievements listed above. It must do so whilst at the same time maintaining its intellectually coherent curriculum and high quality study programmes. Both growth and the re-structuring of programmes are needed, and the Centre for Lifelong Learning is one strand of growth and change which will contribute to this process.

The new centre at Westhill will provide:

- *flexibility for learners on campus;*
- *recognition for work-based learners;*
- *institutional strategies for supporting lifelong learning;*
- *accreditation opportunities and recognition on non-traditional learning achievements;*
- *open and distance learning opportunities;*
- *a major APEL scheme allowing credit-based learning to develop on a significant scale for previous learning.*

The key objectives of the CLL involve bringing together into a new unit, eventually to become a school, a range of professional and development work which is capable of generating new activity by both responding to and creating new markets for education and training.

A second major emphasis of the centre will be on shared learning and widening of participation.

Westhill has 'specialised' in recent times in developing and serving a 'community sector' whose educational needs have lain beyond the boundaries of the College campus. The origins of this work lie in Westhill's provision of teachers for inner-city schools, the training of community and youth workers, the provision of INSET and CPD for educational workers and para-professionals in schools, the provision of counselling and guidance training services, the identification of the educational needs of major faith groups and ethnic minorities and the conscious attempt to combat the effects of racism and social exclusion. The new alliance(s) required by Westhill will, it is anticipated, mandate the CLL to carry this work forward into an environment where the words 'community' and 'partnership' are likely to be given increased importance.

These partnerships will enhance the College's options to take up some of the recommendations of the Dearing Report (1997), including:

- the development of HE/FE links and collaboration;*
- the extension of 'regional' co-operation;*
- widening of access and participation through a participation strategy;*
- the further development of student choice.*

The West Midlands is the second (outside London) largest concentration of ethnic minorities in the UK, and the College has already made a specific commitment to the regional Muslim communities. Westhill will attempt to extend opportunities for personal and professional learning for individuals who are socially excluded and belong to these communities. Muslim women, for example, who wish to access professional areas such as social work, youth and community work and child care will be a specific focus. Westhill has a growing relationship with Islamic 'alternative' and non-institutional HE providers in Greater Manchester and Leicester. Westhill intends to develop joint provision at sub-degree level with these learning organisations when places and funds are available. The CLL will play a significant role in this development.

In conclusion

It is in the College's interests to enter discussions on future alliances on the basis of negotiating strengths. These will include its already proven capacity for developing systems and procedures and, within its previous remit, for programme and course development. However, the growth of the Learning Society, the emergence of mass higher education, the increasingly interventionist stance of the funding agencies, the need to address the Dearing Report issues, the Government's recent White Paper 'The Learning Age' and the increasing uncertainty surrounding small HE institutions as viable, independent units all currently contribute to an unstable and volatile existence and angst over the College's future. The Centre for Lifelong Learning, whilst being in no sense a panacea for these anxieties, is a positive step towards Westhill's engagement with these concerns and will therefore be an asset in the generation of the College's Alliance strategy.

Appendix 2 contains the Prospectus for the CLL and additional material concerned with its activity and business plan and its marketing and publicity material. The Deputy Principal as instigator and line manager of the scheme had direct responsibility for the Centre and its management structure – which was implemented through the Centre's staff.

The endpoints of these developments were intended to bring about major institutional change in order to ensure viability in respect of financial health, coherent academic programmes, sustainable new developments and secure and acceptable levels of autonomy for Westhill within a university alliance.

Westhill wished to retain its separate and distinctive mission deriving from the traditions and values of the historic Free Churches. These included inter-alia, commitment to quality and excellence through education; a concern for social and political justice; a high sensitivity towards the disadvantaged and the cultivation of a sense of personal responsibility. Its recruitment policy encourages applicants from minority groups and those who have experienced social, educational or material disadvantages and social exclusion and no religious test is required of staff or students. Westhill College conceived of itself as an innovating 'learning organisation' capable of delivering a dynamic and evolving curriculum to the highest standards in its chosen market place.

A long (and tortuous) process of work towards the alliance was initiated in 1998 and continues up to the present. It is not the purpose of this project to analyse this in detail but it is necessary to note the headlines and milestones in this process. These include:

- consultants report and business plans;
- action plans with funders;
- acceptance of plans by Governing Body and Trustees;
- establishment and staffing of CLL;
- widening of participation through implementation of shared learning scheme;
- delivery of new programmes - schedule(s);
- internal college re-structuring and staff commitment;
- Investors in People Award/staff development plans;
- financial data: income stream(s);
- alliance(s) progress schedule(s);
- major negotiations with all College stakeholders, including all staff,

- construction of an entirely new relationship with the University of Birmingham, the chosen partner in the strategic alliance.

(Appendices 1 and 3 contain detailed proposals and specifications relating to the proposed alliance).

At the time of writing (April 1999) the strategic alliance has been confirmed, illustrated by the press release below. However, the process is by no means complete and major issues are to be resolved, though these do not appear as insurmountable. Appendix 3 contains a limited selection of (still confidential) papers concerning the alliance which were co-authored by the senior management team of Westhill and the University of Birmingham. The Deputy Principal's role was both generic and specific within this process and it is claimed, (it is hoped with fairness and appropriate legitimacy), that where curricular matters and the CLL are discussed many of the pro-active elements were provided by him.

PRESS RELEASE

NEW STRATEGIC ALLIANCE BETWEEN WESTHILL COLLEGE AND THE UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Westhill College and the University of Birmingham are proposing to form a new strategic alliance that will build on their existing close relationship to extend and enhance the educational opportunities offered by the College and the University.

Westhill College, founded in 1907, and the University of Birmingham, founded in 1900, share a common heritage and the historic concern of the people of Birmingham to achieve the highest standards in education.

The new alliance will:

- reinforce and renew the academic strength of both institutions;

- provide a major new development for the future benefit of Birmingham and the Midlands region.

Westhill College is already accredited by the University of Birmingham and the two institutions have enjoyed close links for many years. Now, looking to the new priorities in higher education identified in the Dearing Report, and endorsed by the government's green paper, *'The Learning Age'*, they believe that a close alliance is in the best interests of the College, the University and the region.

A new joint venture

The principal joint activity to be carried out at the Westhill campus will be the development of continuing studies programmes, access programmes and part-time undergraduate degrees, together with a continuation and enhancement of the present activity carried out by Westhill College.

The vehicle for the joint activity will be a jointly owned company, limited by guarantee, with equal representation of the Westhill College Trust and the University Council. Its responsibility will be to ensure the preservation of the missions of both institutions as they relate to their joint activity at Westhill and to any other activities that the partners may undertake.

Better use of resources

The overall strategic gain for the two parties is that through improved academic activities at Westhill they will be able to teach more students and more students from many different backgrounds. The site will be used more fully, for example by a greater and more effective use of the Orchard Learning Resources Centre with its excellent Library and student learning facilities. For the University, space will be released on the Edgbaston campus which, with 19,000 students, is now approaching maximum capacity. The estate at Westhill will continue to be held by the Trustees of Westhill College and will be leased to the joint company.

Staff transfer

With effect from not later than 1 August 1999, the University of Birmingham will transfer to its employment the academic-related staff of the College together with the permanent support staff working at Westhill.

Commenting on the new proposals, the Principal of Westhill College, Professor John Briggs, said: "The new alliance will bring the College and the University into a much closer working relationship. It will enable Westhill to keep to its core values of the Free Church tradition and to continue to implement and develop its mission."

The Vice-Chancellor of the University of Birmingham, Professor Maxwell Irvine, said: "This is a very exciting and important development. Together, the College and the University aim to serve the community better. We shall increase access to higher education for under-represented groups and maintain our long-standing commitment to scholarship and research of high quality."

Enquiries to:

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Phase 2

Widening Participation – Research and Development Activities

If the Centre for Lifelong Learning was central to the Westhill conception of a strategic alliance, then the notion of widening participation and access was key to the CLL's own mission. Conceptually the Centre and the College had both a mission and a strategy and what was required however was a recorded evidence base in order to test the claims made for the sites of learning which exemplified the existence of the dynamic curriculum.

Part 1 - The context of the research

Phase 2 of this explication begins by focussing on the learning context for the growth of learning communities. The concerns of the research are located within the sphere of lifelong learning as outlined in Phase 1 of the overall project. Subsequently, some of the policy context for widening participation is addressed. Most germane to the project overall however is the testing out of the potential yielded by the twin notions of 'sites of learning' and the 'dynamic curriculum' which underpinned the intention to offer lifelong learning opportunities to socially excluded groups. This was done through an evaluation of the learning needs of what began as three examples of 'sites of learning' and ended up a sample of five. This research led the Deputy Principal to submit a funding proposal to the HEFCE under Circular 98/35 which was successful in generating a £40,000 project. (See Appendix 4, document D – HEFCE 99/07 page 10). (This research/development project will report on its findings and outcomes in late 1999). The HEFCE funded research project is at the time of writing continuing, and will have prepared the ground for a launch of learning programmes and courses to be delivered at the designated sites of learning which help constitute the 'network of learning' referred to earlier (at page 48 and 49). This latter reality, it is argued, was 'discovered' when in practice the sites or nodes of learning began to articulate their wants, needs

and aspirations as extensions of their existing learning achievements through the action research activity of the project. It is at this point in the narrative that past and present merge into the future perspective and orientation embraced by this explication. The language of explication consequently evolves from the past to the continuous and future tenses!

Education is often thought of as part of the general process by which children are socialised into the adult world. In this view, childhood is followed by a period of training which provides young adults with the generalised skills necessary in a particular area of employment and/or the specific skills required in a given job. Additionally, of course education is seen as having wider aims than training; in preparing children for all aspects of adult life as citizens, consumers, parents and so on. Whilst these broad distinctions are useful, there are also positive benefits to be derived from the use of the term 'learning' as opposed to that of education. Learning emphasises the active processes which take place both within education and training, but also in a wide variety of social contexts, not least in the workplace and within communities of identity on an everyday basis. However, the exclusive use of the term 'learning' may lead us to overlook the unequal distribution of participation in all forms of adult education and training which is rightly the concern of the public policy (McGivney 1990, Sargant 1991, Courtney 1992).

By lifelong learning we mean opportunities to learn throughout adult life, for people in paid employment, in unpaid employment, in retirement and in their social and environmental context of 'lived experience'. Lifelong learning as a concept has a long and distinguished history (Wain 1993, Gelpi 1986, Tawney 1938 and Kelly 1962) and it is evolving conceptually at the present moment in time, as is evidenced in the first part of this explication.

In the 1980s lifelong learning became closely associated with the name of Ettore Gelpi and the work of the UNESCO Adult Education office in Paris. He emphasised that adult learning must be informed by working life but not controlled by it and has stressed imagination and creativity rather than a narrow view of

competence. House (1991) has expounded a persuasive account of how continuing liberal education still plays an important role in American higher education and wider civic life.

Education has for a considerable period of time been a part of the wider social and cultural production process of modern society and not merely an initiation to work. The nature of work itself and the production process is changing permanently and this means a need for flexibility, mobility, innovation, and psychological equilibrium to deal positively with these changes; this means also permanent creativity in education, not only to acquire skills, but to understand the complex nature of the emerging productive process and its relationship to the working and non-working environments. (Castells 1996). These are the concerns which contextualised the creation of the Westhill Centre for Lifelong Learning and led onto the research activity described below.

The research programme had the following objectives:

- a) to investigate the learning programmes available in the selected 'sites of learning';
- b) to explore the varied nature of programmes and to devise content for the 'dynamic curriculum' model (described below).

By sites of learning, we mean those education initiatives which:

- a) provide a major focus on **personal development**;
- b) provide learning opportunities for substantial sections of an identified community (especially for those with limited previous formal education experience);
- c) provide an individual or person-centred learning approach with learning choices and opportunities available to participants;
- d) provide continuous learning opportunities rather than a one-off opportunity;
- e) encourage the entitlement to learning;

- f) focus on contextual constructivist perspectives (outlined in Phase 1 above).

A primary objective has been to evaluate the extent to which sites of learning provide increased opportunities for continuing general education and for adult learners. Within the constraints and possibilities of their circumstances, people struggle to make sense of their lives and to provide a decent standard of living and quality of life for themselves, their families and their communities (Giddens 1991). It is contended that this form of struggle is simultaneously a reflexive and learning process. The relationship between adult learning and everyday living, including the wider definition of the work environment discussed in Phase 1 of this project, is at the core of interest within the research paradigm described below.

Part 2 - the dynamic curriculum model

It is the belief of the project partners, whose communities are the focus of the empirical research reported here, that the widening of access to mainstream provision at the University of Birmingham and Westhill College of Higher Education involves the recognition of new and often unrecognised needs which are emerging from socially and economically excluded ethnic and faith communities.

Starting points for the project participants included the recognition of cultural difference, the promotion of key/core skills and the identification and support for 'life transitions', 'reference groups' and 'social participation' which it is anticipated will help break the logic which leads to disparities in access to and achievements in education. Taken together these factors make up what is referred to as the dynamic curriculum for widening participation. Although the dynamic curriculum looks backward to the histories and biographies of its constituents, it has a future orientation intended to bring about change and to challenge previous exclusion from learning opportunities.

The dynamic curriculum attempts to draw upon the social capital which reaches into and attracts immense loyalty among some of the most deprived and excluded

communities, particularly in this case within and beyond the City of Birmingham. Many of these communities are faith and ethnic groups who have built a communal existence around their religious and cultural practices. The churches, mosques, gurdwaras and temples, for example, are arguably the biggest mutual institutions of local and regional civic society. The benefits of the proposed model will be felt by individuals but it will also inculcate concepts of discourse, citizenship and social/political participation which draw upon a belief and commitment to social and communication practices. There is, we might assert, such a thing as society when we identify contexts for learning.

The dynamic curriculum addresses four issues of principle and policy:

- i. The existing HE curriculum is most often pre-figured, pre-formulated, pre-existing and was designed for campus based 18+ students in residential settings. For the majority of higher education students this may be appropriate but the issue addressed here is that very substantial minorities, who do not correspond to 'normative' requirements, in fact have their own.
- ii. Widening participation is now concerned with creating demand not simply opening doors a little wider to what exists. Providers of higher education need to be market makers not just market takers. Access is no longer about more sophisticated and expensive rationing of places but about the dynamic development of provision and opportunities. (Jary and Parker 1998)
- iii. The dynamic curriculum also addresses the issues of quality, such as fitness for purpose. A new approach to primarily adult learners is suggested, based in two settings, the community (involving ethnic/faith/interest) and the workplace (involving work-based or work-related learning). Open systems are needed, exemplified in notions of Credit, WBL, VLL, APEL, and a qualifications framework linking CE, Adult Education, FE and University provision. Maintaining quality within new initiatives is a vital matter but should not be confused with methodology. Quality is independent of a

specific method of delivery or learning (see HEQC 1996 and Dearing 1997). The benefits of market led choice and sensitivity to consumers is surely therefore to be recognised but the emphasis on quality must be maintained.

- iv. The dynamic curriculum is not a substitute for improved mainstream HE provision. It is or should be a separate and complementary approach to learning and teaching which recognises the diversity of learning modes and practices. Quality and uniformity are hard to reconcile in HE, but high quality performance to acknowledged standards in different contexts is surely the aim.

The dynamic curriculum being developed at Westhill can be summarised as embracing the following elements:

- a philosophy of educational development with a strategic and programmatic framework;
- a new form of participation and responsiveness involving adult learners and their experience, values and expectation; a stakeholder approach;
- there is an emphasis on action learning and self-learning competency rather than on 'provided' education;
- a focus on learning rather than teaching;
- a focus on the individual's responsibility for learning rather than on the institutions' needs and requirements;
- a focus on the connecting activities of educational institutions and sites of learning rather than the insulated activities of colleges and universities;
- recognition that the contexts in which people need to learn encompass an increasingly wide range of sites and settings (including community based and voluntary sector bodies, churches and faith association, ethnic groups, intermediary bodies such as trade unions and of course the panoply of work sites);

- part time and continuing study and informal learning are promoted, as is the reality of existing work-related learning;
- equal access to learning promoted by the positive recognition of difference, e.g. Islamic Learning for Muslims, the use of ethnic languages, the recognition of faith groups and religious belief as learning contexts and the recognition and validation of different styles of learning;
- equal Access to learning for work-based and work-related learners, promoted by the recognition for academic credit of: work processes, team contributions, personal resourcefulness, implementation of change and innovation, self-development for personal and professional employability.

Part 3 - Sites of learning: prospects for the dynamic curriculum

The action research reported on in part 6 of Phase 2 is to be applied to five designated sites of learning, three of which are described in outline immediately below. These three particular sites, it is anticipated, will yield important evidence which will attempt to test the claims made for the dynamic curriculum. It is these three sites which provide the focus for Westhill's Widening Participation project for the HEFCE and which is the subject of part 2 in Phase 3 of the project.

- a) City College Birmingham (an FEFC – funded corporation) has sponsored an existing constituency of learners through the recognition of the 'Women's Academy' as a site for access and opportunity in HE. A range of progression opportunities from the existing A level and GNVQ qualifications is being crafted at this centre. Joint curriculum delivery between Westhill and City College will be trialled. The Westhill Islamic Learning programme will be re-shaped for women only provision in order to ensure progression from FE level qualifications to HE accredited courses at Westhill College and the University of Birmingham. (Following the implementation of the strategic alliance on 1 August 1999 this will be known as The University of Birmingham, Westhill).

b) Golden Hillock Mosque is an innovative cluster of community-based activities where the learning divide, which frequently excludes those people with minority ethnic and faith characteristics, will be challenged. The cultural and linguistic capacities of the Golden Hillock Islamic community will be placed at the centre of a **capacity building** scheme involving a series of courses focused on learning skills which contain higher education outcomes and lead to credit-bearing University of Birmingham awards (probably at CATS level 1). Golden Hillock currently provides for the following:

- an employment centre utilising Koranic languages and languages of the Indian sub-continent;
- a supplementary school requiring teacher training support;
- opportunities for the development of counselling skills for hospital and prison visiting (currently untrained);
- community development and support services in housing and health which currently require professional inputs and training.

c) The Sikh Community and Youth Council, Handsworth, Birmingham is a voluntary association for the extension and development of the Sikh faith and culture. It attracts many young Sikhs who want to 're-discover' their culture and develop an identity which is inclusive of their conditions rather than exclusive of either older or modern experience. The Council has established a learning centre with modern ICT facilities in its premises. As with other sites of learning, progression to HE opportunities is a key issue to be addressed.

What the activity will look like in practice is described below. A common feature will be the development within three case studies and a joint project (outlined below) of a prospectus for a dynamic curriculum. This includes the recognition of innovative learning in practice and will address how different sites of learning influence what is learned and how it is learned. The three case studies will generate three separate but related project data sets all of which will focus upon the

establishment at the University of Birmingham and Westhill College of a set of new learning opportunities. This learning involves community learning partnerships, local employers where feasible and a range of community-based learning activities.

A limited number of key themes are identified and evaluated in terms of how and to what extent they help widen participation in HE for the target learners. These include:

- how personal knowledge/learning in respect of HE and professional requirements for progression is acquired and used;
- how credit and qualifications frameworks can be used to secure access, success on course and further progression;
- how the HE institutions themselves can facilitate the sites of learning and identify simultaneously for themselves those aspects of good practice which act as a catalyst for institutional growth and change.

The achievements of the dynamic curriculum are designed to deliver:

- interdisciplinary understanding, involving collaborative learning with those living and working in ethnic, faith and community settings;
- cognitive gains in understanding how academic systems and conceptual models actually work with non-traditional students;
- the further development of open systems for accessing learning and progression opportunities;
- the management of incremental institutional change through curriculum innovation;
- a real and meaningful account of sites of learning which exemplify constructivist learning and contextualised knowledge.

The origins of the dynamic curriculum model: a short explanation

The dynamic curriculum can be said to originate in three sources:

- 1.) Those educational initiatives which have had at their core the commitment to widening and deepening participation and achievement in learning. This has meant and continues to mean enlarging the existing constituency of lifelong learners and ensuring that more individuals successfully get to the starting line. Examples include the historic British university 'extra-mural' and continuing education provision, the growth of an 'Access' curriculum in the 1980s and 1990s and the growth of institution-based outreach provision building upon the philosophy and practice of community education in Europe, the USA and UK. The Fryer Report (1998) is a recent example of a policy driven intervention in this field which may prove to be influential in the long run.
- 2.) The models of adult learning and reflective learning associated with the work of Malcolm Knowles (1981,1983), Donald Schön (1983,1987) and Michael Eraut (1992). These perspectives have attempted to refine what is taken to be valid knowledge, having implications for progression in education and training. (The three sources mentioned here are by no means exhaustive, even within the field of adult learning and teaching. However, they point us to examples of a field of knowledge which has placed reflection, experience and the nature of knowing at the centre of theorisation on learning).
- 3.) Those 'new' systems of open learning which embrace for example credit systems, new information based learning technologies (such as the internet) and those features of both practitioner and organisational learning which include:
 - the accreditation of prior experiential learning;
 - competency development and its recognition;
 - methodologies for credit rating and credit mapping learning provision;
 - in-company, organisational learning;

- workplace and work-related learning;
 - 'action learning' philosophies and methods.
- (see Teare, Davies and Sandelands , 1998).

The dynamic curriculum in practice: examples and links with the University of Birmingham and Westhill College

The three sites of learning outlined above represent only a selection of the contacts and partnerships between Westhill and the University of Birmingham, and the 'hinterland' of learning communities in the West Midlands region. The following list is not exhaustive by any means but it demonstrates the range of active links included in the process of institutional change and the transformations which are the subject in part of this research and development activity.

- The Golden Hillock Mosque, Birmingham
- The Hindu Temple Management Committee (Hindu Council of Birmingham)
- The Hindu Women's Network
- The Darul Aloom College, Manchester, and the Islam Centre, Leicester
- Black and White Christian Centre, Selly Oak
- Peace Studies, with University of Birmingham, School of Continuing Studies
- WBL at appropriate levels of accreditation
- Alliances with organisations whose core activity is the competence and capacity development of the individuals who comprise their core work force (for example, those who bring together the academic and the vocational via personal and professional development, such as the Brookes Advisory Clinic in Birmingham)
- Classroom assistants and childcare with Birmingham LEA and Coventry Community Education
- Kidderminster Muslim Womens' College
- Birmingham as a 'learning city'.

As a consequence of the wider articulation of learning needs being thrown into greater prominence by the dynamic curriculum and its research activity, there has been a need to define the growth of a network of learning. The vision of this network is synthesised below in the form of a prospectus statement.

Part 4 - Towards a Network of Learning

The trend towards lifelong learning and widening participation together with the potential of information and communication technology (ICT) has opened up the opportunity to explore 'provider side' issues which influence access to HE by under-represented groups. Developmental work arising from access projects, adult education and new systems of 'open learning' has identified a need to review HE curricula in terms of content as well as modes of delivery. The intention of the network is to recognise innovative learning in practice, involving community learning partnerships and local employers.

Aims of the network:

- to develop lifelong learning;
- to widen participation in HE and target under represented groups;
- to open up new routes to HE using new technology;
- to identify and create pathways within a unified credit framework
- to link the 'nodes' of learning (or sites) through an alliance or partnership for learning recognition and development.

Provision

The network will emphasise the need to devise and develop programmes which:

- do not involve full-time attendance in HE;
- are deliverable outside main sites (including the home and the work place);

- can be delivered through and with different media so as to develop a dynamic curriculum, responsive to the needs of individuals and the community;
- are inclusive, whilst preserving the highest quality associated with the University of Birmingham and Westhill College.

Towards a unified credit framework

The network hopes to establish a group which will develop modular blocks of provision within a common credit framework which bridges FE and HE. In the first instance, specific curriculum areas will be highlighted which will be accessible in some way throughout greater Birmingham, employing outreach, ICT technology and other methods to reach those currently under represented in HE. Maximum flexibility in modes of learning will be developed with a CATs system put in place so that achievement in one organisation can be transferred to another and there is accredited achievement available at all levels.

Using technology

A technology group will be established to explore the potential use of new technology for on-line and distance learning, sharing the experience of FE and HE. Local and regional industry will be involved to develop distance learning packages and linkages with the UFI (University for Industry) and National Learning Grid explored. A primary aim of the group will be to identify provision to be the subject of an internet/web-based and/or electronically delivered programme in 1999/2000. (Appendix 4, document E evaluates the technical requirements of this programme).

Communicating with the market

The network must ensure that the right services and provision are established to meet the needs of the local community and enable individuals and groups to be aware of developments taking place. As such, under represented groups of learners in Birmingham must be identified, together with their specific needs in terms of

skills, content and modes of delivery. A strong identity for the 'University of Birmingham/Westhill Learning Network' must be established, with an appropriate logo, web-site and other publicity materials and it will be necessary to investigate the feasibility of a 'one-stop' single telephone information service to link existing and developing services.

In order for such a network to truly meet the needs of the community which it serves, real co-operative partnerships must be encouraged to develop between local HEIs, FE institutions, school, libraries, industry and community-based organisations. The network must also have strong links with regional and national initiatives such as UFI and the 'Digital College'. The establishment of such a network will provide for the kind of co-operation between institutions which is innovative and allows for individual growth and community capacity building. Between the institutions involved, the network is intended to be fully inclusive, providing something for everyone, at every level, accessible in some way or other, everywhere. The research into sites of learning to be reported as part of the overall project cannot however ignore the actual labour market in the city and region. An indicative review of this aspect of context follows and is included here because it is a real context for perception, affordance and action and it was compiled by the DP as evidence for the widening participation initiatives of which the researched case studies which are included in part 5 of Phase 2 to follow.

Review of the labour and skills market

A recent report by the National Skills Taskforce ("Towards a National Skills Agenda" 1998), distinguished between Skills Shortages and Skills Gaps.

Skill Shortage – refers to the situation where there is a genuine shortage in the labour market of a type of skill being sought leading to difficulties in recruitment. The report indicates that the most pervasive shortages exist for IT specialists.

Skill Gap – a deficiency in the skills of existing employees or new recruits which reduce business performance. The report points to deficiencies in employability and key skills generally, including graduates.

The demand for generic skills and personal competencies has increased in recent years through an emphasis on customer care and the complexity of the production process. Problem areas include communication, customer care, team-working and computer literacy together with motivation, discipline, judgement and initiative.

In relation to the specific regional labour requirements, the case for a lack of suitably trained candidates in IT was further backed up by the ESF: West Midland Regional Assessment giving guidance to those bidding under Objective 4:

“The growth in recent years of IT usage by firms of all sizes and in all sectors, together with the ever increasing range of available IT applications, has made IT literacy a required skill for workers in most occupational groups, while at the same time significantly increasing the demand for IT specialists. There is evidence that skill shortages exist in both higher level IT specialist skills and lower/intermediate level IT user skills.”

A HEFCE press release (18.8.98) points to the under representation of Moslem women, young black Caribbean men, people with disabilities and those from poor backgrounds within HE and there is a strong statement of support for the building of partnerships between HEIs, schools and especially FE colleges in order to improve success rates of previously disadvantaged students and increasing the numbers progressing to HE.

The Birmingham and Solihull FE Widening Participation Partnership has commissioned Warwick University to carry out a data-analysis which indicates that participation rates of people from minority ethnic groups are higher than those of white people. In addition the general participation rates appear to be higher in the area surrounding FE colleges.

Research carried out by Birmingham Council for Voluntary Service (BCVS) in 1994 identified a total turnover of £37.2 million within a sample of 179 (of 1,500+) local voluntary organisations, making them significant community sector employers. However, funding dependency and a lack of key management and organisational skills makes voluntary and community groups, especially those from minority ethnic communities, very vulnerable. Organisational and management difficulties are often cited by funders as reasons for withdrawing funding from voluntary and community organisations.

Currently, many organisations are facing upheaval, financial constraints, expansion in some cases, new working methods and a range of changes necessitated by external pressures. The effectiveness of the sector in responding to these challenges is clearly going to be a critical factor in maintaining it as a significant employer in the region and enhance its capacity to expand and provide more employment opportunities.

Research carried out under the auspices of REACHOUT, a project which works specifically to create a route to higher education for disadvantaged groups in the Newtown, Ladywood and Lee Bank areas of Birmingham, indicates that many involved in the project have a sense of being in the wrong job area and are unable to move out of it without further qualifications. This problem is particularly acute for people who trained for specific vocational areas after leaving school. There is a wealth of training and experience in areas such as childcare and social care, however without the attainment of new qualifications, little possibility of obtaining increased responsibility through promotion.

This information gleaned from local and regional labour market surveys represents only a very limited snapshot of the work context in which lifelong learners are likely to find themselves. Its purpose in this explication is to remind the reader that there are objectively determined sets of circumstances which impact on the real possibilities for employment for those who are the subject of the research which is

reported below. The purpose of the project has not and is not to attempt to resolve those difficult issues of causality where achievement is concerned. However, it must surely be acknowledged that in offering models and theories around the notion of 'affordance', where lifelong learning can lead to personal and social transformations, it would be naïve to ignore the persistence of structures of inequality which serve to exclude whole social groups from full economic and social participation in British society. This snapshot of the labour and skills market should serve only to alert us to the lived realities experienced by learners who are lacking the requisite skills and educational attainments.

The learning context: some research questions

This project overall is concerned at both a theoretical and practical level with the linkage between different spheres of human activity, each of which can be defined in terms of a specific research question:

To what extent do existing conditions (including cultural/faith identity) perpetuate or change existing patterns of adult participation in lifelong learning?

What is the relationship between personal development needs and wider work-related educational needs? (This question must also address some of the demands of the local and regional labour market as previously indicated).

What is the relationship between sites of learning and the changing requirements for learning (ie, the dynamic curriculum)?

In the opening section of Phase 2 of this explication the context of research was identified in terms of lifelong learning and the growth of a distinctive approach to learning. The next section goes on to outline the main concerns of the research activity, and the methodology used.

Part 5 - Methodology for the research into widening participation

Figure 2: Methodological summary

1. Interviews with significant actors
2. Questionnaire survey
3. Case-studies

In order to get some idea of the range of learning involved in this project, approaches were made to a number of organisations and individuals with interests in the field. A series of interviews were conducted during the approximately six month period reserved for the collection of data. Additional contacts included researchers at other universities, including Staffordshire University and their help and assistance at a number of points in this study is gratefully acknowledged.

It was clear that the methodological approach would need to be broad enough to encompass schemes with very different organisational parameters. Furthermore, it would be necessary to cast the net widely in order to find out if others were achieving similar objectives by quite different means, not least using different terminology to describe them.

Methodological rationale

The activity began with a set of research questions, expressed in the form of project criteria. From this set of project criteria, a number of evaluation criteria were developed. This is summarised in figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Project criteria and evaluation criteria

Project criteria	Evaluation criteria
<p>The extent to which sites of learning have community involvement in their setting up or running.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The origins and motives of the site. 2. The analysis of social, economic and technical change that has taken place.
<p>The extent to which sites offer choice in relation to education, training and lifelong learning.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Choices. Possible restrictions on types of courses. The mode of delivery – on-site, off-site, open learning? Matching particular requirements. 4. The quality of advice, counselling and support available.
<p>The extent to which sites prioritise the less well educated and less skilled and compensate in some way for previous negative experience of education and training, and contribute to equal opportunities in employment, education or training.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Attempts to prioritise the less skilled and less well educated, including attempts to compensate for previous negative experiences of education and training. 6. Attempts to overcome some of the generally agreed barriers to adult learning, e.g. situational: time, costs, transport, time of day, childcare; dispositional: attitudes, perceptions, expectations; institutional: the unresponsive

	<p>system, education and social selection, reference groups (McGivney 1990).</p> <p>7. The attention paid to the education and training needs of women.</p>
<p>The basis that sites have in an analysis of technical, economic and social change.</p>	<p>8. An emphasis on education/training/learning (as defined in this project).</p> <p>9. The relationship between the scheme/site and other training policies and initiatives within the enterprise.</p> <p>10. The motives and outcomes for employers and employees.</p>
<p>The extent to which sites represent significant educational innovations and new structures for adult learning, and have policy implications for the extension of lifelong learning.</p>	<p>11. The policy implications that can be drawn from the site.</p> <p>12. The relationship between the site and the size and type of enterprise.</p> <p>13. The transferability of the site's operations.</p> <p>14. Links with educational providers, both proactive and reactive.</p> <p>15. The overall contribution to adult learning.</p>

In order to operationalise these evaluation criteria for use in assessing the sites of learning through either questionnaire or case-study, it was necessary to define quantitative and qualitative information required in order to answer questions arising in the evaluation criteria. These then constitute the operationalising criteria.

What follows are short case studies on the sites of learning which are the collective focus for the Westhill widening participation initiative developed under the aegis of the Centre for Lifelong Learning. This particular initiative resulted in a successful application for a project to HEFCE under circular 98/35 inviting bids to encourage wider participation in higher education and to lay the foundation for effective institutional strategies for the future. Westhill managed a consortium bid involving a consortium of HE and FE providers and was awarded funding of £40,000 to develop 'New Sites of Learning: under-representation of Muslim Women in HE' (See Appendix 4, document A (i) and document D, HEFCE Widening Participation: special funding programme 1998-99 - Report February 99/07 p10). (Phase 3 of this project presents an account of cognitive outcomes and changes in practice which can be said to emanate from Phases 1 and 2 of the project which were noted respectively in the conceptual issues surrounding lifelong learning and in the insights of the action learning research reported here).

The report of the research activity begins with an annotated and abridged assessment of project and evaluation criteria which were applied to the case studies. This is followed by an account of the five sites of learning which had been selected for research activity. The project research was the key responsibility of one member of the Centre for Lifelong Learning, David Thompson, who worked however within a research and development team whose overall responsibilities were to the Westhill Deputy Principal. The Director for the Centre for Lifelong Learning and her administrative colleagues played major team roles, involving liaison with some eight partnership organisations across the City of Birmingham.

Part 6 – Widening Participation research

‘Methodical Rationale’ – Meeting the project and evaluation criteria

Figure 4

Project criteria in respect of case studies: a summary

Criteria.	Met? Yes/No, Implicit/Explicit.
Extent which sites have community involvement in setting up or running	<i>Implicit</i> in evidence. Can be understood from description of organisation (e.g. references to community based (Golden Hillock) or educational based (Women’s Academy).
Extent to which sites offer choice in relation to education and training.	<i>Explicit</i> from introduction-outline of what courses are currently offered.
Extent to which sites prioritise less well educated and skilled. Compensation of negative educational experiences? Equal opportunities?	Perhaps not entirely clear, but in some instances this criteria is <i>inferred (implicit)</i> . With reference to prioritisation, the information can be extrapolated from the nature and level that the courses are pitched at and provision of facilities such as Job Clubs. The ‘compensation’ question is not evident but may appear more in student interviews. Equal Opportunities (E.O.) at the Women’s Academy.
Technical, economic and social changes (analysis).	Implicit
Extent to which sites represent educational innovations and new structures for adult learning. Policy implications for LL?	<i>Implicit</i> from site descriptions in introduction and from interviews. Policy implications and attitude to LL derived (explicit and implicit) from interviews with respect to widening participation; this may be covered in thematic conclusions without being specifically identified.

Figure 5

Evaluation Criteria with respect to case studies

Criteria	Met? Yes/No, Implicit/Explicit
1. Origin/motives	1. <i>Explicit.</i> } From introduction.
2. Analysis of socio/economic/tech change	2. <i>Explicit/implicit</i> } From introduction and interviews.
3. Choices of course, delivery mode, matching requirements.	3. Course – <i>Explicit</i> . Mode – <i>implicit</i> (limited opportunity to for observation).
4. Quality of advice/support.	4. <i>Implicit</i> ? Perhaps may need further explanation – but this may be sketchy due to limited opportunity to observe advice/support mechanisms.
5. Attempts to prioritise less skilled/educated etc.	5. See answer in Row 3 – Project Criteria.
6. Attempts to overcome barriers to adult learning...	6. Not specifically addressed but <i>implicit</i> both in the introduction and interviews.
7. Educational/training needs of women.	7. <i>Explicit</i> if specific women's programmes are in place.
8. Emphasis on education.	8. <i>Explicit</i> and <i>implicit</i> .
9. Relationship between scheme & other training policies/initiatives.	9. Not explicit, but can possibly be extrapolated from the information provided.
10. Motives & outcomes for employers/ees etc.	10. Interviewees have raised the question of impact on staff and staff resources as well as costs. This is <i>explicit</i> in the interviews and conclusions when this subject has been particularly emphasised.
11. Policy implications	11. <i>Implicit</i> from conclusions but not specifically mentioned.
12. Site, size, type of enterprise.	12. <i>Explicit</i> .
13. Transferability of site's operations.	13. Difficult due to specificity of operations.
14. Proactive/reactive links with educational providers.	14. <i>Explicit</i> .
15. Contribution to adult learning	15. <i>Explicit</i> and <i>implicit</i> from introduction and interviews and conclusions.

Data Collection and Research Methodology

The organisations identified for this research project are as follows:

The Women's Academy, Birmingham

Golden Hillock Community Centre, Small Heath, Birmingham

Sikh Youth and Community Centre, Handsworth, Birmingham

Muath Trust, Camp Hill, Birmingham

Sparkhill and Sparkbrook Community College (524 Centre), Birmingham

Aims

The principle objective is to identify and investigate one of a series of recognised social groups who have not to any great extent entered into the higher education environment. In this instance the research has been directed toward Asian (Muslim) women, where a clear pattern has emerged where females withdraw from the educational system at an early stage and often fail to re-enter further or higher education.

In researching this particular category it is not necessarily within the remit of the project to identify specific reasons for this withdrawal and enlarge on them. The driving force behind the research is 'widening participation' in order to identify ways of enabling Muslim women to engage in HE.

This enabling process can be brought about by assessing cultural needs and commitments and providing a dynamic curriculum which is integral with communities on their own terms. This is facilitated by building strong partnerships between HE institutions and cultural/community organisations.

Potentially, this research acts as the initial catalyst in identifying ways of building partnerships, gaining trust and evolving the educational process to become more adaptable in meeting the needs of the identified subject groups.

Identifying responses

A number of core areas identified as a focus for research include:

- What is the form of knowledge that is emerging presently?
- What are the core skills achieved, what courses are being offered (academic/vocational)?
- What knowledge (professional, personal, educational) are students able to bring to the process?
- How can this be recognised?
- What is the current model (or culture) of learning?

Data Collection

Three methods are identified:

- Accumulation of literature and statistics released by the community organisations (undertaken by the University of Central England (UCE), our partner in the HEFCE funded project and Westhill).
- Interviews with a selection of education providers and key personnel (Westhill).
- Interviews with students attending each organisation (UCE).

Literature

This can take the form of marketing material, reports and statistical analysis of the student profile. The aim is to provide a qualitative and contextual background to the organisation as well as complementing the main body of data.

Interviews with students

Undertaken by the University of Central England (Dr Fetemah Rabiee), they involved group interviews of approximately up to six students per organisation. It was decided that Dr. Rabiee should interview the Muslim women students because of concerns for meeting a community need for sensitivity and maintaining an all female environment.

Interviews with Personnel

Mainly one-to-one interviews with people involved in the general running of the organisation or existing educational provision. The interviews were held in a relaxed, informal environment at each centre. Up to four people per organisation were questioned.

The interviewing format was of a semi-standardised nature with a schedule of loosely framed questions identifying key themes and helping to provide a framework to the research. The questions were partially formulated from a series of pre-meetings with each organisation where issues, needs and concerns had been already identified by a number of the interviewees.

The interview process was less structured in order to accommodate aspects unidentified by the interviewer but seen as important by the interviewee. Every effort was made to avoid weighted questions which may provoke specific and controlled responses. At the end of the interview the interviewee was given an opportunity to raise any further issues which were omitted from the rest of the meeting.

The case studies which follow constitute Westhill's interviews with executive level employees and deliverers of education within each research group. Although not always mentioned specifically, it must be remembered that generally speaking the case studies and conclusions are written with respect to widening participation for Muslim women. Many of the observations and conclusions, however, could just as easily be applied to other student profiles.

CASE STUDY NUMBER ONE

The Golden Hillock Centre.

107-113 Golden Hillock Road,
Small Heath,
Birmingham B10 0DP

Introduction

Initiated in 1983, the Mosque and associated complex is one of the largest in Western Europe. The Centre provides a community service for ethnic minorities of predominantly Asian origin in the Small Heath and surrounding areas. These districts are inner city environments with all the associated issues of poverty, unemployment and social deprivation, which are continually being addressed.

Dar-UI-Uloom Islamia is the parent organisation for (amongst others) the following projects.

- Golden Hillock Resource Centre
- Welfare Advice Work
- Gateways to Learning
- Projects with East Birmingham College
- Adult Education Programme
- Golden Hillock Community Centre
- Golden Hillock Community Care Centre
- Youth and Community Resource Centre
- Golden Hillock Asian Languages and Job Club
- School Education Project
- Men's and Women's Study Centres
- Golden Hillock Employment Training Centre

The objectives of the organisation are named as follows:

- enhance employment prospects;

- encourage economic growth and wealth creation;
- protect and improve the environment, housing and conditions;
- targeted support for people in minority ethnic communities;
- tackle crime and improve community safety;
- enhance the quality of life for local people.

Its educational provision is in partnership with East Birmingham College who are able to provide a wide range of FE courses.

Typical courses include:

- management and business administration;
- IT;
- childcare and nursery.

Facilities at the Community Centre include:

- training rooms;
- computer rooms (12 computers);
- a variety of various sized lecture/seminar rooms;
- recreational area;
- kitchen area;
- sewing and crafts centre.

Interviewees

Name	Title
Pervez Iqbal	Centre Manager
Yvonne Bird	Centre Manager (Women's Study)
Imtiaz Shah	Community Projects Worker with respect to Industry

Findings

Opinions on Educational Provision, With Respect to HE

It is believed that there is a need for such provision, allowing for certain considerations. For example, courses should be initiated from the Centre through new and wider partnerships charged with expanding the existing provision.

In this provision gender issues were considered of particular importance. The careful and sensitive use of buildings and facilities will help provide confidence in attempting HE programmes.

Flexibility for students in terms of timetables and especially subject matter is seen as very important. The HE institution "must put on the courses most widely requested". It was also commented that HND courses may prove popular.

Finance is cited as a major concern. More funding and financial commitments need to be identified (although it was unclear from what quarter this would materialise). Certainly financing studies may prove the single biggest obstacle for students considering a pathway into HE. It appears that for a number of reasons (not least limited income) students or their families are unwilling to pay even relatively small amounts in fees of any kind. For example, at the moment Golden Hillock is withholding registration and exam fees for their courses because from experience the imposition of such fees decimates enrolment.

Perception of Current Limitations or Restrictions (e.g. physical/organisational/logistical).

Travel needs to be kept to an absolute minimum, particularly with relation to women. Even within the locale, travel is cited as a critical factor. However, it is believed that women students find Golden Hillock a particularly safe environment in which to work. If any visits have to be made to campus then they should be kept to an absolute

minimum, with students being bussed back and forth. By maintaining close working relations between the HE provider and Golden Hillock and building trust within the community, this may help ease the concerns of visits to campus. Pertinent examples highlighting the travel issue are graphically illustrated below.

- In a recent incident, fourteen students who were enjoying IT courses provided at Golden Hillock were informed that attempts were being made to send them to other centres. This resulted in approximately 70% fall out.
- One student was identified as “desperately” wanting to go to Westhill to undertake a Primary Teaching course but will not be allowed to travel such a distance (six miles) or participate within the campus environment.

Opinions regarding finance and forging working partnerships (outlined previously) were reiterated in response to questions about limitations and restrictions.

Although it is understood that extra facilities may be required (more computers, TV, video, reprographic equipment etc), the Centre complex has many suitable high quality rooms to accommodate students entering into HE.

The Requirement for Additional Resources

Apart from hardware, a well-resourced library is considered to be of particular importance. Whilst the local public library is used it is considered inadequate to meet HE students' demands. It was hoped that funding from the City Council would be forthcoming, but this did not materialise due to budgetary limitations.

Staff as a resource is an important consideration. Development, training and support programmes should be provided to empower staff within the Centre when meeting the demands of HE provision.

Views on the Delivery of HE Courses

An interesting observation of the learning process on the Indian sub-continent was forwarded as a potential model of delivery. It appears that the methodology of learning can be very different to that of the U.K. Much more emphasis is placed on practical work and discussion at the expense of theory and written work. Therefore, it was suggested that group activities and student input and assessment of this process should be given more emphasis, especially as language barriers would hinder the production of written assignments.

Careful consideration must be applied, a good balance of assignments and supervised practical work is also recommended, sometimes the validity of written work produced by the student away from the Centre is brought into question. Therefore delivery must be practice based and observational, with regular “home work” and in-house assignments so that students can be monitored and supported with tutorials.

IT is regarded as important. Older students may need more help with using computers but it is recognised that eclectic delivery through audio, video, practical work and IT helps stimulate and motivate the student. What is of concern is that the student is empowered in this process by having full flexibility of access when and where they want, with a complete (IT) infrastructure in place that will meet these demands. For example the strategic use of E-mail for correspondence will assist the process. Free and easy access to these and other resources was suggested.

Quality Issues

Building lasting partnerships is identified as a key factor in helping to widen participation within the Golden Hillock Community. Quality assurance can derive from active and continually on-going relationships between the HE provider and the Centre, building up the trust of the local community. Assurances of quality must be in place and adhered to ensure that people do not get disheartened.

Based on previous experience, the local community has sometimes become suspicious of FEFC funding centred on “quantity not quality”. It was perceived that there was no evaluation of the people being enrolled, and conclusions made that it was an exercise merely to raise revenue for educational institutions. This must not happen if HE provision is to succeed.

Cultural awareness is an important issue. The specific needs of Muslim women must be addressed in terms of local study in a safe, trusted and controlled environment, preferably with childcare provision. On a wider aspect, considerations for Ramadan, fasting and other socio-religious sensitivities should be addressed.

Concerns of standards were raised. Good and consistent advice should be available for the assessment of students’ suitability (e.g. language and note-taking skills) and, to ensure quality, entrance tests or some form of “screening” process.

Finally, it is proposed that class sizes should not be too large, due to the potentially high level of support students will need, although no clear indication was given of numbers. The provision of suitable study material is seen as an important issue in the support of students and maintenance of quality of delivery.

Tutorial/Pastoral Support

In the initial stages of a course, assistance from the educational institution is viewed as particularly important. Practical academic support would be regarded as very helpful, with structured support sessions very important, especially for those less able to cope. The suggestion is that at least one hour’s pastoral and one hour’s tutorial sessions for small groups should be allocated per week.

Teaching and tutorial staff should possess great sensitivity and understanding, especially with respect to the needs of Muslim women. This aspect would be greatly assisted if tutors or mentors were drawn from the community. For example it was identified that up to eight people in the community have obtained degrees from abroad which are

unrecognised in this country. These individuals could play a significant role in assisting students at Golden Hillock. Complimentary to this would be the use of existing Asian students who are in their third year of a degree course and can offer peer support and advice on negotiating with HE. Staff from the HE institutions that actually know the community would be an important asset.

What Type of (Women Friendly) Courses Should be Offered?

Generally speaking it was considered that vocational courses are nearly always preferred. Modular type courses with flexible delivery were identified as being best suited to the needs of the community. Educational institutions must take the lead in this type of provision and recognising educational achievements gained abroad.

The following were indicated:

- teacher training/ classroom assistants/ national curriculum subjects;
- religious studies;
- social sciences/ counselling/ child care;
- languages;
- degrees in Islamic studies/ Arabic/ Urdu;
- courses aimed at recognising and building upon degrees obtained from abroad (AP[E]L);
- post graduate courses such as one year Cert. Ed.;
- pre-entry (taster?) modules to ensure people can cope with the demands of study;
- business and management;
- finance;
- law;
- medicine.

Other Issues

Generally, opinions raised in previous questioning were reiterated. Most notably:

- finance
 - costs to be kept to a minimum;
 - Small Heath is a "poor area", so many potential students cannot meet costs;
 - extended families of perhaps 100+ have continuing social and financial commitments (for example, frequent community weddings and celebrations;.
 - even as little as £200 would be difficult to pay;
 - Golden Hillock attracts students because of free courses.
- counselling and one-to-one guidance will be important, with approachable and supportive tutors;
- importance of the fact that local people relate closely to Golden Hillock due to
 - cultural and ethnic awareness;
 - religious awareness;
 - community landmark;
 - sensitivity of needs.

Therefore:

- building working relationships is a key factor when proposing and implementing HE.

General Summary of Conclusions and Observations

"The market is there, if we can prepare people there is no problem".

Building Partnerships is viewed as the key to progress. The above quotation is an extremely positive statement, but it comes with a very important caveat. Bridges must be built to enable projects such as widening participation to succeed. At all stages close co-operation and communications between the HE provider and Golden Hillock must be maintained.

Community representatives must be actively involved in the process of setting up HE study (and also running it as well). Their input with respect to the types of courses and nature of provision is vital if the confidence of the local community is to be gained and high drop out rates avoided (which sometimes occurs if community concerns are not fully addressed). One method suggested that may help this process is to canvass community elders. For example, on occasions men undertaking visits to the Mosque have been questioned on their opinions. A leaflet was suggested that could ask such questions as:

- what type of courses do you want offered for you or your children?
- what community provision would like to see?
- do you want these courses offered?
- what would be your main concern?

If widening participation is to succeed within Golden Hillock then it is important that other key themes identified throughout the interviews are addressed.

- *Flexibility and Quality* – Delivery should be flexible in both its style and timetable. However quality must be maintained throughout; careful assessment of student capabilities will help retention rates and foster confidence.
- *Sensitivity* – Vitally important, particularly with respect to Muslim women. The needs of the community must be considered constantly, placing curriculum delivery within the Community Centre will be essential in meeting those needs.
- *Tutoring and Guidance* – Setting up a reliable system of mentoring will assist greatly, especially for students in the early stages of study. It will provide firm foundations for lasting success, reduce drop out rates and encourage enrolment.
- *Finance* – Ways must be sought of supporting both the Centre and the individual.
- *Resourcing* – The Centre must be adequately equipped to enable students to have the same opportunities as traditional students on Campus.
- *Recognition* – Due recognition of past study (sometimes achieved abroad) and help with languages and IT skills could play an important role in student development.

CASE STUDY NUMBER TWO

The Muath Welfare Trust

The Bordesley Centre

Stratford Road

Camp Hill

Birmingham B11 1AR

Introduction

Founded in 1993, the Muath Welfare Trust is dedicated to assisting the local (Yemeni) community's cultural needs with respect to educational programmes, social welfare, religious activities and recreation.

The Trust's base is The Bordesley Centre, a large (ex)school building situated in the Camp Hill/Bordesley Green area of inner city Birmingham. The area has a large ethnic population which is challenged with many of the problems associated with inner city areas, such as high unemployment and limited opportunity. The Trust provides a key focus in meeting and understanding the needs and problems of the community it serves.

The Trust commands a wide student profile and serves people from a number of backgrounds, including:

- Pakistani;
- Yemeni;
- Egyptian;
- Iraqi;
- Bangladeshi.

There are around 250 students enrolled on a variety of courses. Of these, around 200 are women on mainly daytime courses (the majority part time, but around 40 full time); many of the 50 or so males attend evening courses.

Courses offered include:

- Arabic studies and languages;
- Islamic studies;
- A-Level Urdu;
- GCSE/NVQ business administration;
- ESOL 1 and 2;
- OCN qualifications;
- computing;
- teacher training and child care;
- counselling;
- a number of other business and training programmes.

The courses are offered through a partnership with East Birmingham College, but the Trust offer other services such as specialist training programmes in cultural awareness and a consultancy service, all with respect to the Muslim way of life. They are also hoping (with EBC) to offer an Access to HE course in Arabic and Islamic Studies.

The Centre is able to offer a variety of other facilities, including:

- on site Mosque;
- crèche facilities;
- 12 computers;
- a small library;
- catering;
- conference centre;
- sports hall;
- youth club;
- a hostel for visiting (male) students;

- Women's Centre (They are hoping to employ an Arab Women's Development Worker in the near future).

Interviewees

Name	Title
Kassim Ahmed	Administration Manager
Hamid Lea	Education and Training Manager

Findings

Opinions on Educational Provision, With Respect to HE

It was suggested that the Trust would like to provide a continuity of education from 7+ and upward and want to become involved in the delivery of HE courses (in much the same way as their partnership with EBC). However, it is regarded as very important that a sound base in terms of education for younger people is established so that their educational experience is a good one that will foster continuing study.

It is believed that there is a current demand for HE and it is certainly worthwhile pursuing, therefore courses should be introduced as soon as reasonably possible as part of broadening opportunities in education. There is already HE level study of a type at the Centre, through a passion for knowledge and study that certain students already possess, but this is not backed by any formal recognition.

Perception of Current Limitations or Restrictions (e.g. physical/organisational/logistical).

Generally speaking, it is believed that the physical and the administrative structure is in place, although a limited number of courses should be prudently matched to the

facilities at the Centre. It was suggested that existing support staff could certainly deal with the responsibilities of such provision.

The Requirement for Additional Resources

Although the library is small, the Centre staff are continually attempting to build up this resource. While it is quite general with respect to Islamic/Arabic Studies it will need extra resources and core texts in order to cope with HE courses. In addition, further IT provision is thought desirable. It is conceded that these requirements will have to be linked to a cost-effective system.

Views on the Delivery of HE Courses

It was suggested that activity based learning, rather than just formal lecturing should form a key part of the experience. Where teaching does occur, it should involve small groups, as with the Mosque based Qu'ran teaching. However, what is vitally important is that the calibre of the teacher should be closely matched to the needs of the students. This is an area that in terms of staffing requires further development.

It is agreed that no one specific method of delivery should be relied upon. Instead the opportunity should be taken to include a variety of formats, including:

- IT/computers;
- distance learning;
- video;
- lectures;
- practical workshops.

However, it is believed that for example, as an aid to teaching Arabic, IT would not be sufficient enough in itself.

It is hoped that links will be made with Arab universities abroad and access to these institutions would prove advantageous. Another suggestion was that an attempt could be made to 'dovetail' HE courses with the Yemeni Institute since this organisation offers a high standard of education in the Yemeni National Curriculum to students from 7-20 years of age.

Quality Issues

Good quality teaching and delivery was of particular concern. For example a non-Muslim teacher in Islamic Studies would not be credible in the students' perceptions.

The curriculum itself was identified as a cause for concern. It was suggested that many Muslims are wary of the mind-set of secular universities in terms of their curricula and of student life on university campuses. Delivery must be considered carefully in order to address the spiritual, moral and cultural issues that are regarded as important in the character forming process that a student undertakes.

Tutorial/Pastoral Support

This was viewed as a very important aspect of student needs. The student/teacher relationship should be geared so that the sensitive needs and aspirations of the student are fully understood. Students may require a significant amount of tutorial support and advice, whether it be community support or university assistance. Some help with languages may also be required. With respect to religious studies, Muslim tutors are essential.

What Type of (Women Friendly) Courses Should be Offered?

- Islamic studies;
- Arabic studies (language);

- women's studies;
- child development/education/nursery nursing/teacher training.

Other Issues

- The issue of *travel* was raised. For single people it was deemed not to be too much of an issue. But for mature women with family commitments it would be far more difficult; the provision, support and resources should therefore be made available at the Bordesley Centre. Many people would prefer to study at the Bordesley Centre because of its sensitivity of provision and knowledge of the local community.
- *Flexibility* of provision was regarded as a key element in widening participation. If courses can be offered within a timetable which incorporates evening and weekend access to lectures etc., then this will go a long way to encouraging those who have other commitments during traditional weekday/daytime study.

Other comments and suggestions include:

- *collaboration* important in ensuring courses run well and progress is made;
- *secondment of staff* for developmental work (e.g. Islamic/Arabic Studies) will aid progression of HE provision;
- *a three year plan* in terms of
 - university/community development to ensure strong roots;
 - marketing strategy;
- the practical possibility of tying in with proposed *summer schools* may help widen the projects appeal;
- working through a *pilot project* so that on-going problems can be identified and addressed;
- *a partnership* should be formed which will help build confidence in the community.

General Summary of Conclusions and Observations

Clearly, the Muath Welfare Trust is intent on widening its educational provision to incorporate higher education, and that there would appear to be a demand for such courses. However, in the course of the interviews a number of reservations were expressed which need to be addressed with sensitivity and thoroughness. A number of recurring themes and concerns that were especially emphasised included in the following matters:

- *Sensitivity to Needs* – It is essential that careful thought and consideration should be applied at all times. Especially when identifying teaching staff (i.e. Muslim) who will have a cultural and religious affinity with the Muath students and can therefore command respect in relation to the teaching of Islamic and Arabic Studies. Helpful and understanding support through tutorials is also important.
- *Delivery* – The method (as opposed to the medium) of delivery was given particular emphasis. Once again sensitivity is an issue; with the requirement for supportive, practical and good quality teaching. Learning should be placed in context with the cultural and religious development of the student.
- *Resources* – An expansion of the existing library was deemed necessary, with key texts and provisions to aid study in a variety of formats. Staff as a resource was also referred to (see above).
- *Flexibility and Partnership* – Forming understanding collaborations and providing courses with flexibility to enable as many students as possible to engage in HE if they wish. This will be essential if widening participation is to really work.

CASE STUDY NUMBER THREE

The Women's Academy. Higher Education and Sixth Form Centre.

730 Bordesley Green

Birmingham B9 5PQ

Introduction

The Women's Academy (WA) claims to be the first purpose built centre of its kind in the UK. It provides advanced level further education and training courses for both school leavers and mature women. In doing so it provides a safe, secure and supportive environment for women to study and gain qualifications.

In recent years the Small Heath/Bordesley Green area of Birmingham has been identified as a region associated with economic and social deprivation, populated by low-income families and individuals. Agencies that contributed to the funding of this development include:

- Saltley and Small Heath Regeneration Budget;
- the European Regional Development Fund;
- the Further Education Funding Council.

Currently over 200 students (mainly full time) study courses at the WA (provided by East Birmingham College). Of these :

- approximately 80% are Muslim, many between the ages of sixteen and nineteen years;
- approximately 50% of the first year entry were mature students, thought to be women who stayed at home after their school education but are now returning to continue their studies.

1997/8 Women's Academy (WA) Outputs

Table 2 Registration data (WA)

- Number of students registered = 205 (target – 200)
- Number of enrolments = 422
- Number of unemployed students trained = 164 (target – 100)
- Number of qualifications gained = 407 (target - 200)

Progression (%)

Figure 6 Progression outcomes (WA)

Course	FE	HE	Employment	Other
A Level 2 nd Year	13	53	27	7
A level 1 st Year	82.5	2.5	-	15
Tec Nat N/N. 1 st Years	100	-	-	-
DNN			86	14
GNVQ		50	50	
CLAIT	100			

Courses offered include:

- A level
 - biology;
 - chemistry;
 - English;
 - law;
 - mathematics;
 - physics;
 - psychology;

- sociology;
- Urdu.
- BTEC National Diploma in childhood studies;
- NNEB nursery nursing;
- Advanced Diploma in childhood education;
- Advanced GNVQ – business studies;
- RSA CLAIT;
- first aid.

The WA currently has a number of good quality lecture rooms, kitchen facilities and 15 computers with internet facilities.

Interviewees

Name	Title
Julie Alder	Director
Jan Flint	Programme Team Leader – GCSE's and A-levels

Findings

Opinions on Educational Provision, With Respect to HE

Higher education forms part of the full title of the Women's Academy and is indicative of the opinions and aspiration expressed during interviews. Certainly the WA intends to participate in assisting delivery of HE courses and suitable progression routes (although not necessarily actually delivering content). The WA wish to work actively in widening access for local students who are unable (or unwilling) to travel to other campuses.

Interviewees expressed the desire to make contacts and build partnerships with HE providers. In doing this the WA emphasised the need for flexibility, both in modes of

delivery and providing timetables that incorporate both full-time and part-time study, evening and possibly weekend study.

On a more general note, the hope is that the majority of students will do HE courses and become role models within the community. There is a "real pool of talent and intelligence" which may be in danger of being underused, especially if the potential of these students is not met by meaningful careers.

Perception of Current Limitations or Restrictions (e.g. physical/organisational/logistical).

It was noted that existing staff at the Academy will not have sufficient time for any great involvement in new courses. The different (longer) timetable from that of universities means that WA tutors are heavily committed to marking and preparatory work when not teaching.

Close co-operation must be achieved in order to combine resources and prepare materials. The time involved in setting up courses is also a concern. It was therefore suggested that a clear implementation plan was essential in the development stage.

Finance is a concern. It was made clear that money must be made available to finance more resources and materials. Money and costs were also cited as of particular concern to students.

The WA is currently undergoing major extension work to its premises, which will be completed by September 1999. The extra rooms and further resources (more computers etc) were considered essential to coping with HE study and additional students. Nevertheless, concerns were expressed about how best the WA could cope with an increase in courses.

The Requirement for Additional Resources:

- more books/journals;
- additional computers coming on line later in the year will assist in delivery;
- technological compatibility important;
- staff resources very important:
 - updating staff in specific subject areas;
 - a staff development programme would help;
 - close and good working relations with Westhill/UCE. staff viewed as vitally important.

Views on the Delivery of HE Courses

Flexibility should be maintained, but a number of delivery techniques were forwarded:

- distance learning, weekend and summer schools to help prepare students for the rigours of HE;
- video conferencing for students wanting to join in with lectures taking place on other campuses;
- IT/internet as a study aid, with email support;
- lectures recorded on videotape so they can be re-scheduled for later study with handouts;
- OU style delivery which would be well resourced.

The style of teaching was raised as an issue of concern. Assessment and learning, it was suggested, should not solely rely on formal modes such as exams and lectures. Students should be assessed through a variety of exercises such as seminars, group work, projects and report writing, for example. The emphasis should be on learner-centred activities as opposed to didactic forms of teaching. Whilst students often prefer the teaching approach, it is believed that it will provide less opportunities for students to become independent thinkers and learners.

Quality Issues

It was stressed that the genuine motivation of widening participation should not give way to a cost cutting exercise where the bottom line is financial gain.

Through regular meetings between both parties good practice and consistent provision should be maintained (however, the logistics of implementation by September 1999 are a concern). This will help establish compatible record keeping, standardisation of marking and moderation. One staff concern is of 'de-skilling' and 'dumbing down' if provision is not well thought out.

Having the right staff is an understandable concern. Whether it be through their own staff development or from the HE institution, staff sensitive to student needs and able to implement courses effectively will be required. This is paramount in giving good provision and support for students and will help develop confidence within the community.

If a 'dynamic', flexible curriculum is introduced, implications for staff include:

- training in new technology;
- training in the adaptation of 'normal' teaching methods.

Tutorial/Pastoral Support

This was rather less emphasised than in the community organisations interviewed. This is probably because as an educational establishment, the WA is better geared to provision of this kind. However, the need for additional staff resourcing partly reflects concerns that existing staff will not have the time to assist students who will be undertaking HE study.

'Non-traditional' students were definitely thought to need more support through regular contact. Assistance in study skills, English language and specific subject areas

all require consideration. A similar system that is currently in place at the WA could be suitable. For A-levels this involves weekly tutorials and in the first year they are centred around English skills; in the second year key skills are addressed.

What Type of (Women Friendly) Courses Should be Offered?

- combined honours degrees (modularised in order to aid flexibility);
- PGCE;
- classroom assistant training;
- training to be a teacher (nursery nurses);
- management and business studies;
- youth and community studies (in long term);
- sociology/psychology/English (most A-level enquiries for these subjects).

It was suggested that students did not consider career courses and progression to any great extent. This results in demand for courses that are "not particularly vocational".

Other Issues

- It has already been emphasised that *finance* should not be the sole reason for HE establishments offering to widen participation. Nevertheless, when questioned about general issues, it was identified that for the WA, finance plays a vital role in their ability to achieve this concept. Acknowledgement of pay for weekend work was an example cited. It was advised that the funding methodology should be fully investigated.
- The subject of *travel* was highlighted. Generally the students at the Women's Academy are from the immediate locality, they are not keen on travelling and often get ferried to the Centre by male family members. Increasing numbers of students are travelling from further afield but when it comes to examinations, for example,

most of them do not like to travel or engage within the EBC main campus. Although engendering confidence to travel further was viewed as a worthy aim, in reality courses will need to be provided to a large extent within the centre.

- There was a general feeling that both the WA and the HE provider should work on an equal footing to obtain maximum advantages for both parties. For example, there should not be just a one-way referral of students; in other words Westhill and UCE should reciprocate where appropriate. In addition, the WA and the HE provider should combine to form a common and coherent marketing and business plan. The WA could also offer Westhill/UCE staff training in assessment skills for TDLB D32/33 and 34, and promote APL schemes.
- Concern was expressed that any one group of staff should not feel the “poor relation” in any links with HE institutions.
- It was suggested that it would be unwise to offer too much too soon, and that perhaps a pilot scheme should be considered followed by expansion at a later date.

General Summary of Conclusions and Observations

Clearly, the Women’s Academy is different in many ways to an institution such as Golden Hillock which emphasises a variety of community related provision. The essential difference is that the WA is purely an educational institution. Because of this they are well geared to progressing at a quick pace towards the development and delivery of higher education courses. This is regarded by its clients as an important and worthwhile development, a chance to broaden horizons and gain opportunities on women’s own terms.

However, some of the concerns and observations highlighted during the interviews are similar to those raised within the community organisations that form part of this research. To re-emphasise the most common themes:

- *Forming Partnerships* – Seen as important to the success of widening participation. Partners should work actively and closely towards a commonly agreed progression route for students, but which satisfies the providers that each partner is geared to coping with new courses. A partnership should help build trust and mutual respect between staff of both institutions.
- *Flexibility* – The ability to provide courses across a broad timetable was identified.
- *Delivery* – A wide range of techniques should be utilised to aid flexibility of study and the timetable. A pilot scheme was considered important in order to test systems, methodology and responses; building on such a scheme as time progresses.
- *Finance* – The concerns about financing staff, students and resources will not dissipate without a full investigation and explanation of how additional funding will be found to meet the identified needs.
- *Resourcing*- the WA are due to have additional computers and rooms which will aid greatly the delivery of HE courses. However, this should be supported with more books, journals and staff support.

CASE STUDY NUMBER FOUR

Sparkhill & Sparkbrook Community College – 524 Centre

524 Stratford Road

Birmingham B11 4AJ

Introduction

The 524 Centre forms part of South Birmingham College, located on the busy Stratford Road around which the communities of Sparkhill and Sparkbrook are situated. These communities have a high proportion of ethnic minorities and, as an inner city area, are challenged with associated problems such as unemployment and social deprivation and exclusion.

The 524 Centre is a thriving and active community college that is expanding on a regular basis. Students and courses are split between the main building and up to thirty satellite 'Local Access Centres', predominantly primary schools. A high proportion (between 75-90%) of students are women (many are Muslim), although some courses attract a more equal gender split. It is estimated that there are approximately 800 FTE students.

Courses offered are numerous and varied, but include:

- GCSE maths and English;
- A-level Asian languages;
- C & G teacher training;
- BTEC computing (with HND to follow shortly);
- childcare;
- crafts and music;
- ESOL;
- media studies;

- practical engineering and motor skills.

During the course of the interviews staff identified an interest and need for higher education courses. This is confirmed in a recent newsletter, which stated that as a result of an open meeting a list of over eighty names had been compiled, all interested in gaining HE qualifications.

Although many of the students may come from potentially disadvantaged backgrounds, often brought about through unemployment, it was suggested that they have high educational aspirations and/or qualifications.

The Centre itself offers many facilities, including:

- at least eight classrooms;
- 15 main PC's, plus 12 laptops;
- a mobile library service linked to the main campus;
- crèche facilities;
- cyber café;
- canteen area;
- a radio sound booth;
- 'The Student Voice', a magazine written by students on ESOL courses;
- a regular newsletter compiled by staff for the benefit of all.

Interviewees

Name	Title
Aziza Chaudry	Assistant Principal
Ranjit Dhanda	Head of Department – Development & Student Services
Assata Owen	Community Development Manager

Findings

Opinions on Educational Provision, With Respect to HE

The present portfolio of the College and its students suggests that there are positive intentions and a willingness to engage in HE courses. This appears to be endorsed when interviewing staff.

It was suggested that it is important for the 524 Centre to be seen to be offering further services in principle, but there is also a tangible need and demand for HE provision. In effect, the 524 Centre want to respond to student needs in this area by offering in particular a “seamless continuum of opportunity” which is not in place at present.

HE is viewed as a natural progression in offering courses to students in the local community who have the appropriate experience and qualifications. Access to HE could take various shapes and forms in order to meet (or generate) this demand.

Perception of Current Limitations or Restrictions (e.g. physical/organisational/logistical).

Certain issues common to other organisations were mentioned; such as carefully planning space for extra provision, access for disabled people and staff as a resource. What was particularly interesting was the notion of overcoming *mental* boundaries and restrictions for both students and staff.

With respect to the students; by providing information and empowering the student it is believed that any mental barriers in the form of confidence or hesitancy will be overcome. Once this happens students will engage and influence what is provided for them and emphasise what it is they actually want.

Staff also have mental obstacles and may feel comfortable with the existing provision and be reluctant to advise students about HE issues and therefore engage fully in this process. Paradoxically, one interviewee suggested that staff can be quite flexible and can adapt to engaging in different roles. Whichever the case, building links and partnerships was stated as imperative. Regular contact and dialogue was viewed as important in overcoming barriers. This will help initiate a culture change in the broadest sense.

The Requirement for Additional Resources

This of course depends upon the curriculum being provided. Generally speaking, it was believed that providing existing staff are appropriately trained, people do have the capacity and knowledge to deliver higher level courses. However, they may need supporting with respect to current delivery techniques for HE and how students cope with higher level courses. It is also interesting to note the conservatism in the formulation of a “provided curriculum” and to contrast this with the stipulations of the dynamic curriculum and a more contextualised perspective which was also present in the views of staff at the centre.

A larger and better-resourced library was identified as important, although it was suggested that students should be familiarised with local facilities and opportunities, which could help their studies significantly. A regular organised trip to the central campus was also regarded as pertinent to a student’s development.

Views on the Delivery of HE Courses

Exposure to a whole range of formats was seen as useful, including:

- computers;
- video;
- internet links with HE institutions;

- video conferencing.

Using computers was suggested as way of empowering women, providing them with a tool that gives them more opportunities and methods of accessing information of all kinds (an opinion stated in a separate case study).

It was instructive to observe two interviewees (in separate interviews) not necessarily identifying the format of delivery as being critical, but regarding the contextual value of course content as particularly important. In other words “getting behind the subject matter” to identify the purpose and relevance of the study to the student, with respect to today’s world and the society in which we live. By relating subject matter to personal experiences and understanding, it will place study into context. This will have immediacy for the student, who will probably enjoy the educational experience more, fostering further motivation to study. To help aid this process, a mechanism should be in place that recognises mature students’ skills and give them value. An incipient understanding of the dynamic curriculum can be detected in these remarks.

Quality Issues

Dialogue was identified as a key issue and if this occurs on a regular basis then overcoming any issues of quality will be greatly assisted. By communicating with students the college can maintain its relevance in terms of provision. For example, they are attempting to do this with reference to black people, although “there is still more to do”. Clarification of what students want and what the institution expects from them should be defined. If mutual expectations are clear “then there are no real quality concerns”; especially if they are bound by standardised procedures.

Tutorial/Pastoral Support

Support that is particularly sensitive to the cultural and social profiles of students was identified as a requirement, but should be focussed and clear in purpose. Funds for a mentoring system was regarded as important.

It was suggested that the centre's existing mentoring scheme could be utilised (this is being applied to courses such as the Diploma in Public Service Interpreting, the Certificate in Education (Cert. Ed.) and C & G teacher training). This is a system that provides peer support to those just starting, by students who are further along the programme. Often this helps clarify issues prior to seeing a course tutor, making the tutorial process much more useful to the student.

What Type of (Women Friendly) Courses Should be Offered?

Although many students apparently aspire to graduate status for its own sake, there is a trend towards vocational courses. Courses suggested as potentially popular include:

- teacher training *;
- social sciences;
- youth & community studies;
- media studies;
- languages.

**Identified as particularly important, with sixty students on a waiting list already.*

Mainly Primary Teaching courses are wanted. Many women have obtained a BTEC National Certificate in Childcare but would prefer to pursue the teaching option.

Other Issues

- Travel issues were identified but with varying opinions. To a certain extent it was emphasised less compared to other organisations. In fact it was even suggested that it is "a red herring" and that students of all types want to experience campus life and opportunities. If the facilities are there then they will make determined efforts to travel (a recent analysis identified students taking up to four bus rides in order to get the provision they want). It is believed that students will appreciate

occasional trips to campus in the form of day runs, weekends or summer schools. Indeed, it is regarded as an important part of their development; students would enjoy and benefit from the resources provided on the main campuses.

Nevertheless, provision of courses at local centres was regarded as important in the widening participation process. Too much travel will inhibit those with family commitments to both young and old. Excessive time taken in travelling relatively short distances correspondingly reduces the potential study time they have at home or in their local study centre. Thus, the main delivery of courses should be applied within the community.

The following issues emerged as being of significance to the centre:

- flexibility and accessibility of provision was required;
- no 'pilot' courses are required; courses are wanted which are ready to run;
- it is important to identify the correct initiatives so that students "stay on board".

General Summary of Conclusions and Observations

The general perception obtained from the interviews was one of confidence and a readiness to participate in HE provision in order to meet the demands of existing students who now want to take their studies further. This reflects the nature of Sparkhill and Sparkbrook Community College as an establishment addressing the educational needs of the local community.

The proviso is that the concerns identified above should be addressed in order to ensure continuity and success. It is interesting to note, as with a separate case study, an interviewee commenting that providers should possess "no notions" and have "open minds" when trying to assess community needs.

General themes derived include:

- *Partnership and Dialogue* – “Widening participation in the context of HE will only work by looking at HE opportunities in the community through partnership”.

This is a recurring theme in other case studies, which surfaces again here. It has been suggested that a working partnership should be recognised at an early stage of the process. This will build a good foundation and will help strengthen further links between the college and HE institution, fostering meaningful dialogue and understanding.

- *Recognition* – A system should be in place that recognises people’s achievements, particularly with reference to mature students.
- *Perceptions and Understanding* – Both the 524 Centre and the HE institution need to be aware of student issues, local demand for particular courses and find ways of meeting expectations. By offering the right courses this will generate markets and help widen participation.
- *Resources* – Ensuring that staff as a resource are well prepared and confident in the support they have and in the subjects they are teaching. Making sure that concerns are met with respect to materials and books.

If the conditions are met which foster confidence for both institutions, and students have a good experience of HE, then widening participation will occur through positive comments and word of mouth throughout the community.

CASE STUDY NUMBER FIVE

Sikh Community and Youth Service (SCYS)

348 Soho Road,

Handsworth,

Birmingham B21 9QL

Introduction

The SCYS was established around 1980. The organisation whilst acting as a focal point for the local Sikh community, undertakes a diverse range of activities and objectives. The Sikh religion binds the organisation in its philosophy and its projects.

The organisation's aim is to deliver wide ranging activities in order to improve the quality of life for local residents. It concentrates on developing "social welfare facilities" in order to enhance opportunities for the Sikh community in Birmingham and the surrounding areas. Such opportunities may include assistance in recreational, vocational and educational progression. Its over-arching aim is to develop the centre as a "one-stop-shop service", particularly for the Sikh community in Handsworth.

The SCYS quotes four main objectives in its 1997 Trustees Report:

- (i) *The Employment Resource Centre will provide services to enhance employment, training and career opportunities.*
- (ii) *The Women's Project will provide culturally sensitive services to address issues of family support and leisure.*
- (iii) *The SCYS will seek to develop new services to promote the aim of the organisation, in partnership with other statutory and non-statutory agencies.*

It identifies three core services; Sikh information and resource provision, welfare advice and youth projects. In addition it has a Housing Project and a Children's

Project. The SCYS also promote training\educational programmes (in partnership with South Birmingham College) and all courses take place at the Soho Road Centre.

Seven full/part time employees currently staff the centre. These are supported by part time and/or sessional workers, and a core team of up to 40 volunteers working on various projects.

The premises contain a computer centre with twelve PC's, a small library and a number of meeting rooms (one accommodating twenty or more people, another accommodating approximately ten).

Courses currently offered at SCYS are:

- ESOL;
- RSA CLAIT;
- GCSE Punjabi;
- CIT food & hygiene;
- Sikh studies;
- GCSE tuition;
- first aid.

Interviewees

Name	Title
Mr Surjit Viridi	Project Officer (Learning Centre)
Mrs Suptal Dogra	Women's Officer
Mr Jatinder Singh	Project Co-ordinator

Findings

Opinions on Educational Provision, with Respect to HE

Generally speaking, all interviewees responded positively to the notion of providing HE courses, especially within their own environment. There were, however, varying responses to potential demand. For example, it was thought that courses would be well attended and of interest to the local (female) community. Paradoxically, it was believed that whilst provision of HE holds potential, "numbers are always a problem" and that "marketing of the product" needs care and consideration with respect to "demand and supply". It was also noted that elderly citizens are interested in education (e.g. understanding computers).

Flexibility of provision was identified as being important to the success of HE access because it is believed that needs in the Sikh community can change very quickly. It is understood that although Asian women would be reluctant to travel away from the centre, they can bring skills that will enable them to engage in the HE process.

The centre is attempting to develop itself as a 'mini college' with a lottery funded Learning Centre for FE adult provision. However, it was conceded that the SCYS needs to market itself more; the local community not being fully aware of the activities within the centre.

Perception of Current Limitations or Restrictions (e.g. physical/organisational/logistical).

Travel was viewed as an important issue. The SCYS act as a focus for local communities who are inclined not to travel any great distance. Therefore it was generally believed that people would not consider travelling to campus at Westhill or UCE, although the UCE may be more possible due to the immediacy of its location.

In addition the opinion was expressed that local citizens feel that the SCYC centre is a safe and comfortable environment for mature adults and their offspring, both groups may look to undertake further/higher education. However, summer groups and occasional visits were deemed to be acceptable, subject to adequate travel provisions.

It was suggested that in order for HE provision to work the centre would have to be biased much more towards a truly educational environment. The need for facilities such as more formal study resources for HE students was identified. Childcare provision would also be an important issue.

Monetary restrictions were a cause for concern, particularly with respect to the fact that the SCYS is lottery funded, and therefore has to meet certain criteria.

The Requirement for Additional Resources

The need for more hardware in the form of TVs, video, headphones etc was confirmed, as well as an investigation into how their computers would be best integrated. The present library was fairly comprehensive, but with particular respect to Sikh studies. This would need more resourcing with core texts if other subjects were to be offered. The issue of books and crèche facilities need to be considered carefully.

Other suggestions that should be addressed include:

- bilingual tutors/mentors;
- more effective study centre;
- resources and course work on the internet;
- the ability to reserve college books over the internet.

Views on the Delivery of HE Courses

It would appear that most of the community is not aware of how HE courses or institutions work. Help in comprehending the system and identifying the expectations

of both the college and student should be formulated so that a common understanding can be achieved. Adaptation to HE courses was not considered a major barrier.

The OU model was suggested as particularly pertinent, with a system of mentoring, educational packs and occasional trips to campus for periods of concentrated study. Guidance is important (generally people are used to everything being taught), and course-work was also regarded as a good way of monitoring progress. The observation was made that, generally speaking, Asian women prefer to be taught by women from the same cultural background.

Students appeared to be well motivated when using computers as part of their study. This type of format was considered as one that could work well, although tutorial help when interacting with computers was deemed desirable. CD-ROM is thought a popular format through which students respond positively. The use of the internet was regarded as a possibility (although the timetable for being on line, with links to the HE institutions was uncertain). Whatever the delivery methods, flexibility was regarded as essential, both in terms of delivery and time-scale.

Quality Issues

The need was emphasised for much more of an educational type environment, in which women would be able to study to the best of their ability. Women must be confident that they are being provided with adequate course work and tutorial support. It was deemed necessary for a quality assurance system to be in place at the start of provision, and not just as evaluation feedback following a course.

It was specifically expressed that "no assumptions should be made". The dynamics of each class vary greatly and because of this the HE provider must adapt to the educational standards of each student and set assessments etc accordingly. In this respect AP(E)L may have an important role to play. Easy access and interaction with the HE provider was thought to be a necessary requirement.

Other concerns include:

- the importance of equal opportunities;
- limited access to the centre for people with disabilities.

Tutorial/Pastoral Support

This is regarded as an important factor, and one where every effort must be made in order to ensure a degree of success. First of all students should be supported when making their choices of courses and advised on how the system works (e.g. modularisation). Tutors must be fully committed to supporting students studying away from campus, but they should also be flexible: working with students at their own pace and to a non-traditional time-table. 'Professional' tutors are considered imperative in order to fully understand the needs of students, but preferably with a cultural and linguistic affinity, thereby creating a rapport.

Close liaison between the educational institution and the SCYS is deemed very important. Both compromise and mutually agreeable policies need to be ensured so that the tutorial system can work effectively. It was thought that perhaps a 'go-between' working for both partners could assist this process. Obligations need to be identified and agreed, e.g. timetables for tuition, contact phone numbers to aid the support process and exchange of E-mail provision. The OU model was advanced as a typical scenario.

What Type of (Women Friendly) Courses Should be Offered?

It was thought by at least one interviewee that it is very difficult to specify the level and volume of demand. The subjects below act as a general guide:

- business and management;
- child care, primary school teaching and curriculum subjects;
- community and youth studies;

- social work and psychology;
- computing;
- accountancy;
- medicine;
- health studies.

Other Issues

A range of complementary issues was raised and were regarded as being of equal importance.

- *Qualifications and the education* women have received from abroad (often involving degree programmes) needs *recognition*. Some of these women will require further study programmes in order to gain this recognition and have better employment opportunities.
- The diverse *range of experiences* that women possess should be appreciated.
- *Opportunities* should be available for women who have achieved GCSE/A level qualifications and now want to return to education after/during the raising of families.
- Courses should be provided that will aid mothers' education whilst their children are growing, furnishing them with better work opportunities after raising their offspring. With respect to this issue, the provision of *childcare facilities* is important.
- *Fees and the financing* of study could prove a barrier, especially to the unemployed, housewives and mothers. Paying by instalments was suggested.
- *Support* with language skills, including the use of bilingual tutors, will help build confidence.
- People with *experience* of multicultural needs must be actively involved on joint boards/committees in order to ensure success.

- People who have particular experience in widening participation and the type of educational provision this involves should be utilised.

General Summary of Conclusions and Observations

There are a number of themes and issues which were consistently raised or considered to be of particular importance. "Never assume anything" was a recurring phrase, this must be applied at all times throughout research, development and implementation. The Sikh Community and Youth Service are at an early stage in their development as an educational provider. However, their plans are to develop this particular aspect of their provision and build upon the important educational opportunities they already supply to the community. By working closely in partnership, a long-term understanding can be forged which will aid this process. Recurrent themes throughout the interviews are re-emphasised below.

- *Flexibility* – Whether it be the provision of tutoring, delivery methods, assessment or timetable. There is a need to be able to set a pace that each student feels comfortable with and can study when, where and at what time they want.
- *Building Lasting Partnerships* – Implementing a framework and liaison mechanism built on mutual trust, respect and the co-operation of all involved. Ensuring that key people from within the community, with an intimate knowledge of issues concerning local people are involved. Only by doing this, and with respect to the community's own agenda and timetable, can the success of provision be achieved.
- *Recognition* – The ability to recognise achievements and qualifications (perhaps through AP[E]L) already gained, often from abroad.

- *Resourcing* – Gearing the centre much more as an educational establishment. Providing extra facilities both in terms of hardware and library stock were regarded as important to student development.
- *Delivery* – Ensuring a wide range techniques are utilised, not least the use of computers and the internet. But with the proviso that course-work is very important. The implementation of a tutorial system with affinity to the needs of this particular community must be particularly emphasised.
- *Confidence* – Building confidence is regarded as very important. Students must feel comfortable in confiding with familiar contacts (if possible from within their own community). The community must feel confident about the HE provider and the quality of its courses. This confidence is developed through continual and close assessment of community needs and by providing the correct learning environment, all on the community's own terms.

Observations and Conclusions

Whilst there must be recognition of specific community needs and sensitivities, it has become clear from the research that a number of over-arching themes permeate the individual community organisations.

Each theme has evolved through qualitative research across all the case studies. However, by virtue of the fact that each theme has been raised frequently in some form or other at the interview stage, this qualitative data could also be transposed into quantitative results. This was not the purpose of the research method adopted in the project. Using triangulation of data, thematic topics have developed from converging evidence both within each organisation and across disparate groups.

Valuable information can be derived from each of these themes and it is clear that if they can be addressed both before and during the implementation of a widening participation policy it will assist greatly the success of the initiative.

Themes include:

- building partnerships;
- flexibility and curricular innovation (which recognises experience, identity and difference);
- resources;
- finance;
- tutorial support.

This section will briefly expound these different themes and discuss them within the context of debate about widening participation.

Building Partnerships

This concern was raised consistently by a variety of organisations. Without an effective mechanism of dialogue the following themes will not be addressed and the whole initiative may wither.

The process of developing schemes through partnership has been recognised. The DFEE's publication *"Practice Progress and Value (Learning communities: Assessing the Value They Add)"* contains advice applicable as action research.

"Schemes are only likely to be successful if they fit in with the ambitions and desires of the communities they set out to serve. ... Time and trust are important in dealings with communities. Allow sufficient time and resources to enable trust to develop".

Without exception, each of the collaborative study groups associated with the research have suggested the need for working partnerships which will, over time, produce a successful strategy and trust, both within the organisation and the wider community it serves.

Trust and confidence through the involvement of representatives from the community on consultative groups were promoted by both SCYS and Golden Hillock. If people who have a wide ranging but in-depth knowledge of their community are then seen to be actively involved in the widening participation process, foundations will be laid for genuine growth of students (e.g. Muslim women) turning to HE study. From previous experience, the Golden Hillock community has been concerned with implementation without full consultation. It is particularly appropriate with respect to issues sensitive to cultural identity and expectations, for example, meeting the needs of Muslim women's study groups.

The Women's Academy also stressed the need for partnership, but in a more immediate and direct context which reflects that institution's mission. They seek an active partnership that will address a number of issues quickly, e.g.

- suitable progression routes;
- marketing plans;
- compatibility of IT and assessment methodology;
- implementation plans;
- resources and finance.

Flexibility and curricular innovation

In many ways this is the true test of widening participation and providing a dynamic curriculum. Flexibility of study programmes has been a continuing theme throughout the whole range of interviews. Widening participation within these communities will only be achieved through flexibility of:

- timetables;
- curriculum;
- delivery;
- recognition;
- travel arrangements.

Timetables – The ability to provide courses where students can timetable study to their own needs and the practical arrangements of the community centre is essential. However, in many ways notions of timetabling are anachronistic. Whilst tutorials and lectures require regular time windows, every effort should be made to introduce flexibility of provision through other learning (as opposed to teaching) methods. This will help the students:

- schedule their work around other commitments (faith/family/work);
- undertake summer or preparatory programmes of study;
- utilise the learning environment within each centre to its maximum;
- pace their study;
- utilise non-traditional timetables of study (evenings/weekends/inter-semester breaks).

Curriculum – Strict adherence to subjects traditionally run within the HE establishment will stifle potential cohorts. However, there is some correlation between subject demand and existing provision, for example:

- business and management studies;
- teacher training;
- national curriculum subjects;
- psychology;
- counselling and community studies;
- child care;
- religious studies;
- Islamic studies.

More work needs to be done if the notion is to create demand by encompassing the interests of communities and recognising learning activities within each group. Areas of interest suggested at interviews with staff (which should be compared with interviews with students) include:

- languages (e.g. Urdu and Arabic);
- IT;
- Sikh studies;
- medicine;

- accounting;
- ESOL;
- classroom assistant training;
- accreditation of prior learning;
- combined studies programmes.

Whilst some of these subjects sit comfortably within existing parameters of provision, care should be taken to investigate the specific interests of students. For example, it may be that students have particular expertise and knowledge that they would like to tap into as part of their study. HE providers should be adaptable enough to recognise this instead of enforcing their own research interests. It is within this area that the application of a dynamic development of provision and opportunities may be best addressed. Areas of study could also centre around the community centre's own interests and expertise, the acknowledgement of these activities by mapping against the universities' own interests may well be welcomed by community groups.

Delivery – To help achieve a more flexible and dynamic delivery, a number of methods have already been proposed, including:

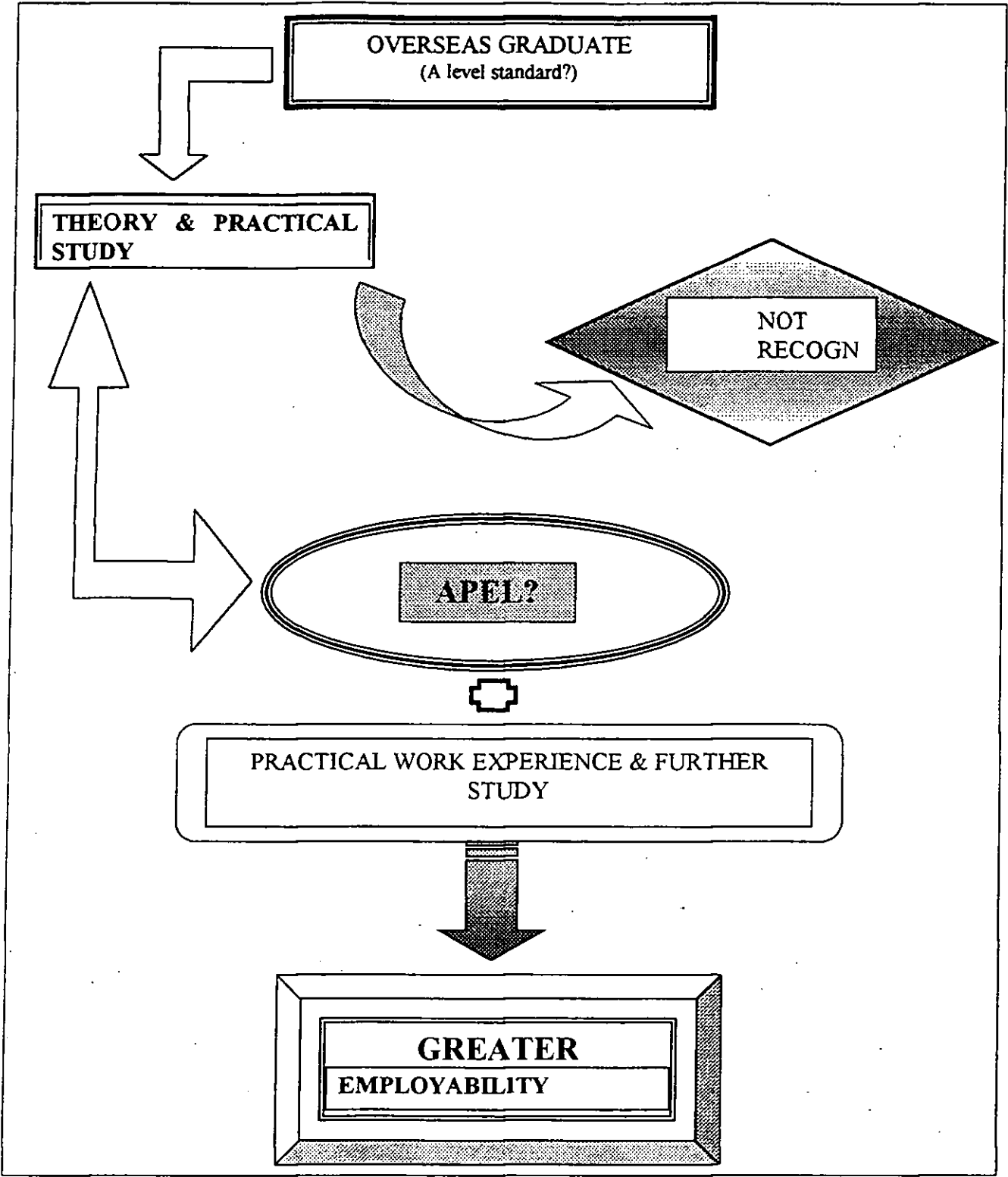
- distance learning;
- OU style delivery;
- video and video conferencing;
- internet, e-mail, CD ROM;
- weekend and summer seminars;
- practical based work and discussion in addition to or as substitutes for some forms of written work.

It was noted (particularly by staff representing all female study groups) that whatever the method of delivery, it should be reinforced by practical course work with regular assignments and assessments. A well-structured tutoring system was proposed in order to give optimum support.

Recognition – HE providers must show flexibility in terms of recognising the experience, education and life skills of women in these communities. The 'A' level/Access pre-requisites for entry are no longer sufficient if market driven and widening participation concepts are to be achieved.

Currency by means of credit, and mechanisms such as AP(E)L could provide a framework that will help bring Muslim women into HE by accrediting their achievements. APEL modules can not only help prepare students for study, by recognising prior learning, they will also be given a step up on their path towards higher education qualifications. Both the SCYS and Golden Hillock specifically mentioned accreditation as an issue for students (male and female) who gained qualifications abroad but do not receive genuine recognition for them in this country. Such students may especially benefit from this APEL process. Diagram 1. below suggests a possible scenario.

Diagram 1. Recognition for overseas graduates



Travel Arrangements – Highlighted extensively within each case study, the need is to reduce travel to a bare minimum. If indeed flexibility of provision can be achieved then it must overcome the requirement for visiting central campuses. Courses must be delivered from within the community if HE providers aim to address one of the primary needs of Muslim women.

Resources

Resources are a genuine concern which all institutions and organisations face. Resources are always at a premium and all of the community organisations involved in this research expressed the need for additional resources to help students involved in higher education study. It is perhaps a practical concern that has not been addressed to any great extent within purely academic debate.

Particular and common areas of concern include:

- a well-stocked library with articles, books journals etc, directly relating to areas of study;
- enough IT provision that is compatible with the HE provider;
- staff training or extra staff to cope with additional courses;
- crèche facilities;
- more study areas.

Finance

Cost assessment is not only identified as important for the provider organisation, but it has already been noted in each of the case studies (particularly raised by Golden Hillock) how even the smallest fees for enrolment and examinations can inhibit the chances of a course running.

The present government has identified lifelong learning and widening participation as an important feature of its education policy. The real test will be in finding practical

ways to encourage students financially, and not only evolving systems of adapting provision to incorporate those who have not traditionally been involved in higher education. The community groups described in this research are active in areas of Birmingham which have a history of economic problems, unemployment and decline. It follows that if Westhill is to help meet their economic and cultural needs through widening participation, financial pressures on individuals and families which may prevent significant involvement in higher education must be addressed.

Tutorial Support

This is a subject that has been highlighted in particular by community organisations. Tutorial support has been identified as important in the delivery format of courses. Their suggestion is that through effective use of tutorial support student retention on courses will be greatly assisted. It could take various forms:

- bilingual tutors to aid study and act as bridge between students and HE;
- tutorial support through E-mail.;
- tutorial support outside normal college hours;
- tutors sensitive and flexible to the needs of each community;
- utilising mentors within the community who may have received higher education from abroad (see diagram 1 – Page 135).

Tutorials may require both academic advice and pastoral care. If a system is put in place that can involve trained or qualified individuals from within each community, it will build confidence and support perceptions of partnership. In short, the dynamic curriculum requires dynamic tutors!

General Summary

In many ways the whole thrust of this research and the conclusions it has reached is a major part of a needs analysis process for these community groups. But each community is different, with independent challenges that can change quickly. To repeat one interviewee "no assumptions should be made". The over-arching themes in this conclusion are important, but care and sensitivity should be considered when applying them to each organisation. Identification of more specific community needs can be found in the case studies.

In proposing HE provision, and thus widening participation, with respect to the various community groups (and perhaps especially for Muslim women) identified in this research project, interested parties should take heed of the following statement.

(Education for all).. "cannot be realised through institutionally-based education.... Only by reducing the need for teacher mediation, and by making use of the full panoply of communication media, is there the possibility of providing access to education, and especially higher education"

The Open University, E355 Block B *Adult learning: individual, group and community*, P.8. (1984).

The implementation of the findings of this research is a continuing task for the partnership(s) which exist between the learning communities and the higher education institutions which took part (Westhill, the University of Birmingham and the University of Central England (UCE). Much undoubtedly remains to be done to meet the plethora of learning needs covered in this part of the explication. However, one fact has been established beyond contention. This is the recognition that for communities themselves which have faced recent economic insecurity and social/cultural marginalisation, there is increasingly a demand for opportunities, where once they expected threats and exclusion. Lifelong learning and widening participation in education therefore are now at the centre of community concern rather than beyond the boundary!

Phase 3

Towards Solutions and Outcomes

Part 1 - Establishing A Centre of Achievement for *The Learning Age*

The publication of the government's *The Learning Age* (DFEE 1998) consultation paper signalled clearly its commitment to reshaping post-compulsory education. The paper is a positive response to many recommendations for the reform of FE and HE set out in the Kennedy (1997) and Dearing (1997) reviews. However, some of the basic assumptions of *The Learning Age* draw upon well established educational philosophy first cogently argued by R.H. Tawney in the second and third decades of this century, and subsequently restated some 50 years later in The Russell Report on Adult Education .

The ideals of establishing broad participation in educational opportunities and that this should take place throughout each individual's life-time, have been encapsulated in the terms *Widening Participation* and *Lifelong Learning*. This positive message that lifelong learning should become a norm within British society was made by David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Employment and Education, in his introduction to *The Learning Age* (1998). What is new in *The Learning Age* is that these calls for a new approach to post-compulsory education have come from government, rather than from professionals or lobby groups. Thus, after nearly a century of philosophical debate and uncoordinated initiatives there is an indication of a strong central commitment to the reform and restructuring of the FE and HE systems, such that they should become more widely used by people throughout their lifetimes and thus help shape a society which is more highly skilled and culturally enriched, and which promotes active citizenship and combats social exclusion. *The Learning Age* and its calls for *Widening Participation* and *Lifelong Learning* may now become fully integrated into the mainstream of higher education. Many practitioners must hope this will be the case. However, the project under scrutiny

here has had to consider the following summary of the policy context and the six questions which arise from it as part of a critical and informed response. There is little doubt that *The Learning Age* has had an impact upon strategic thinking within Westhill and the wider University of Birmingham. These questions and the summarising responses are offered here to raise questions for consideration in the context of the establishment of Westhill's and the University of Birmingham's new strategic alliance. The answers to the six questions are a schema only, intended to put the wider policy issues in the frame alongside the more specific and localised concerns of the strategic alliance which were negotiated during the evolution of this project. The project makes no claim to a social scientific policy analysis, however it has attempted to incorporate these policy concerns within its view of a new 'centre' for the strategic alliance. Part 1 of Phase 3 therefore represents a manifesto for the new Westhill, as part of the University of Birmingham, whilst part 2 adumbrates some of the major outcomes of the development work for which the author (the Deputy Principal) has been responsible during the gestation period of the alliance.

The Learning Age and the new policy context: some initial considerations:

- education and training policies are displacing industrial and employment policies as employment strategies;
- economic change is seen as education-led;
- employability is presented as an economic (and human) alternative to welfare dependency and the rising cost of welfare;
- a new emphasis is on the individual's responsibility for learning;
- 16-19, 18-25 and adult and continuing education policies are seen as part of a strategy for lifelong learning;
- the meaning of participation in education is shifting from a focus on **institutions** to a focus on **learning**;
- the next phase of educational reform will be seen to focus less on education as the **insulated activities** of specialised institutions such as school, colleges and

universities *and more on* the connecting activities of educational institutions pervading the rest of society;

- all these policies have a dual potential which can be explored through the following questions:

1. What is lifelong learning?

- Rhetoric to mask the government's failure to tackle more fundamental problems and little more than collection of re-cycled ideas including:
 - learning centres in shopping malls;
 - The University for Industry (Ufi);
 - learning on the internet;
- a term without focus, priorities or definition;
- the centrepiece of an education-led strategy for modernising Britain;
- the best opportunity we have for achieving a more just society in the 21st century;
- an idea which recognises the new learning and the challenges posed by deep social changes in our society - in particular:
 - the need to support learning across the lifespan;
 - that learning challenges are not linked to particular ages or stages of life;
 - that the contexts in which people need to learn encompass an increasingly wide range of sites and settings.

Perhaps it would be fair to argue that it is an idea which emphasises the need for individuals to take greater responsibility for their learning, but neglects the need to create the context which would make that a reality?

2. What are the implications of taking the idea of lifelong learning seriously?

- It will need a significant shift of resources from:
 - initial to continuing education;
 - full to part time study;
 - higher to further education;
 - from formal to informal learning;
 - from a provided to a constructivist curriculum;
 - from educational institutions to the sites where people live, work and learn.

The contradictions of a lifelong learning strategy will have to be faced. For example the major lifelong learning strategies will involve:

- increasing use of information and communication technologies;
- promoting workplace learning which is likely to benefit existing successful learners and create more inequality not less;
- a radical re-assessment of our approaches to learning that has hardly begun;
- a recognition that lifelong learning is not a late 1990s substitute for improving mainstream provision.

3. What are the problems in current government policies towards lifelong learning?

- It is a collection of initiatives rather than a strategy, and we must continue to consider:
 - funding child care in colleges;
 - access funds for needy students;
 - funds for widening participation;
 - New Deal and Welfare to Work;
 - 'basic skills' summer schools;
 - Ufi-brokering education and training in workplaces;
 - ILAs-individual learning accounts.

- the qualifications, funding and institutional structures of post compulsory education are being left largely unchanged;
- TECs, NVQs, and the qualification system do not provide incentives for lifelong learning;
- the industrial and economic structure does not provide incentives for the majority to become lifelong learners:
 - upskilling is not the only path to business success;
 - many unskilled jobs remain;
 - a high-skill economy needs lifelong learners, but it also needs new approaches to:
 - human resource management;
 - product design and marketing;
 - supplier relations;
 - access to investment capital;
- major structural barriers to lifelong learning remain for the majority:
 - poor previous education persists;
 - low incomes and jobs without progression possibilities persist;
 - class, race and gender inequalities persist;
- there is no investment parallel to that in ILAs (individual learning accounts) and the UFI in new approaches to learning - e.g.:
 - integrating workplace and college learning;
 - using information from the internet to reflect on practice and experience;
 - establishing and sustaining new learning communities;
 - support for a dynamic curriculum and networks of learning.

4. What is needed in a lifelong learning strategy?

- a focus on the demand as well as supply of learning;
- a reform of the industrial structure- promoting new regional industries;

- a coherent system of post compulsory education that stimulates individual learning and creation of new learning communities;
- social policies to overcome structural barriers;
- improving the childcare and benefits system;
- creating incentives for combining part time work, benefits and learning;
- a collaborative research and development programme on new approaches to learning;
- de-monopolisation of the 'learning and knowledge industry'.

5. How could we respond to *The Learning Age*?

- welcome the broad idea lifelong learning and question the detail?
- transform a collection of initiatives into a strategy;
- identify priorities:
 - ILAs or full-time higher education ?
 - promote part-time or full-time study opportunities?
- expand opportunities for sub-degree study through new types of FE/HE links;
- promote the realistic possibilities of workplace and community learning through ICT;
- explore a basis for integrating adult and continuing education and 16-19 education into a lifelong strategy;
- argue for (a) new forms of education/industry links and (b) research and development into new approaches to learning.

6. What are the lifelong learning possibilities for the future?

- a marginal addition to existing provision
OR
- an educational revolution with lifelong learning at the centre of educational policy and priorities
OR
- an incremental revolution leading to an education system based on lifelong learning

- this will be led by:
 - localities and regions;
 - institutions and clusters;
 - professionals in partnership with enterprises and community groups (the dynamic curriculum);
- lifelong learning must therefore begin with learners and potential learners in context.

The Learning Age is not prescriptive and genuinely appears to seek ideas which will develop the vision through initiatives and experimentation. The challenges which face HE in engaging fully with these ideas are perhaps greater than in other sectors of education. Furthermore, in research-led universities, such as the University of Birmingham, with their emphasis upon research excellence and the attraction of young full-time students traditionally judged as 'good' by virtue of a narrow range of A level grades attained at one point in their life, the language and aspirations of *The Learning Age* are perhaps not generally well understood. However, the challenges of *The Learning Age* will not go away. To demur from actively engaging with these new agendas is politically unacceptable. Indeed there are clear signs from HEFCE (for example see Appendix 4, document A (iii), Consultation Document 98/39) that the future funding and growth of institutions will depend upon showing a strategic response to the widening participation and lifelong learning agendas.

This section of the explication outlines an academic plan which is designed to enable Westhill College of Higher Education and the University of Birmingham as an 'alliance' to engage strategically in the development of *The Learning Age* agendas. It is built upon four assumptions:

1. That the concepts of *Widening Participation* and *Lifelong Learning* are inextricably linked.

2. Significant progress will only be made through a strong body of expertise centred around a group of academic and support staff sharing similar ambitions and commitments to those agendas.
3. There will be a need for many initiatives and experiments, driven by individuals and groups of academic and support staff, and these initiatives will need to be evaluated and reviewed to ensure that best practice becomes well understood before being embedded in the institution.
4. A recognition that the changes called for in *The Learning Age* cannot be achieved by an institution acting alone. The ambitions of establishing a learning society are far wider than the remit of a single HE institution and require collaboration with many organisations and other educational institutions. However, the 'alliance' between Westhill and the University of Birmingham can, and should, be both a leader and a catalyst for change towards the aims of *The Learning Age* agendas.

For the University of Birmingham, Westhill these assumptions imply the creation of a centre of achievement, which brings together a body of academic and support staff, who are well resourced and whose principal mission is to develop and deliver the widening provision and lifelong learning agendas.

The alliance is fortunate in that a core of academic and support staff expertise already exists which can drive these developments forward. In both the University's School of Continuing Studies and Westhill College, valuable resources and a strong body of experience and expertise are established which currently address different aspects of *The Learning Age* agendas. The School of Continuing Studies has particular expertise in the teaching of part-time programmes to a wide general public, while Westhill College, through its commitment to social inclusiveness and its close working relationships with the Selly Oak Colleges, has an impressive record of student recruitment from under-represented sectors of society. Both Continuing Studies and Westhill have experience in teaching programmes which offer curricula which are multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary. The strategic alliance between Westhill College and the University, can ensure that the work of

these two existing centres provides the expertise that is required for the development of new initiatives and growth.

This new centre will of itself deliver a range of teaching programmes and educational initiatives which genuinely offer higher education lifelong learning opportunities to a wide range of people throughout the West Midlands region and beyond. However, it is not intended to be an isolated beacon within the University of Birmingham. It will also actively facilitate the adoption of *The Learning Age* agendas across a wide section of the University and will grow to have influence both regionally and nationally.

The academic strategy which follows lays out in broad terms the principles and activities which are necessary to deliver a dynamic but coherent strategy for promoting the *Learning Age* agendas in the University of Birmingham as a whole and as a corporate body. Much of what is required is already in place either at Westhill College or at the School of Continuing Studies. The challenge will be to bring the strengths and expertise of these two centres together and manage them to fulfil existing missions more efficiently and to add new activities. While it will take a number of years to fully develop this strategy it should be recognised that areas of growth are envisaged, particularly through the attraction of new funded student numbers, and these should become the starting point for collaborative work between the School of Continuing Studies and Westhill College. In particular Westhill College and the School of Continuing Studies identify the following areas for urgent development and growth: the establishment of the idea of learning communities based around a range of progression and credit accumulation partnerships which are focused upon the University of Birmingham, work based learning (WBL) within an expanded and refocused continuing professional development (CPD) programme, the building of networks and partnerships with FE and other providers in the region, the development of post-graduate provision for wider communities and the use of new communication technologies for the delivery of new and existing curricula.

A centre of achievement for *The Learning Age*:

Academic Strategy

As part of a university with a strong research profile it is appropriate that this alliance centre will have a teaching strategy which is underpinned or informed by an active research programme. Teaching must address a wide range of academic disciplines and interdisciplinary studies and this should be reflected in the research activities of its staff. In addition there is a need to research and evaluate initiatives and experiments aimed at furthering the widening participation and lifelong learning agendas, whatever their subject base.

Teaching

In embracing the widening participation and lifelong learning agendas the new centre will need to actively distinguish itself through:

1. The high quality of its teaching

This will be indicated by:

- use of the university-wide modular scheme;
- implementation of the teaching quality assurance procedures which apply throughout the university;
- research based teaching;
- a continuous programme of teacher development and training with a particular focus on the teaching of non-traditional students.

2. The adoption of a learner centred approach

This will be indicated by:

- the diversity of programme types;
- the diversity of programme content;

- the flexibility of programme delivery;
- the flexibility of student progression routes;
- the high quality of student support and guidance;
- the flexibility of programme entrance requirements;
- the diversity of learning assessment procedures;
- collaborative arrangements with organisations which represent the interests of individuals and groups who do not currently benefit from HE;
- a rapid response to demands for new programmes;
- flexible use of funding mechanism which encourage widening participation;
- the delivery of programmes at centres throughout the West Midlands region;
- the creation and delivery of the University of Birmingham, Westhill dynamic curriculum model within a network of learning (as outlined above in Phase 2, part 2).

3. A research programme which will evaluate the implementation and theoretical underpinning of the *Learning Age* agendas as applied to higher education. By combining staff from Westhill and the School of Continuing Studies, the alliance centre will have academic expertise in a number of disciplines. Staff will differ in their commitment to research and ability to attract research funding. Where appropriate, staff of the centre will be encouraged to pursue research programmes, to publish research findings, and to establish or maintain links with cognate discipline and schools in other parts of the university. Such links may include contributing to the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) return of an appropriate unit. However, inclusion in any particular RAE unit's return will be at the discretion of the head of that unit, subject to the particular strategy which is being pursued in order to maximise the research rating of the University. [See also the final section of this part of the explication on **Evaluation, Research and Management.**]

4. Implementation of the academic strategy

- **Size of the teaching programme**

Funding of the new centre will need to be underpinned by HEFCE funded student numbers augmented by a range of fully self-financing programmes, and programmes funded upon marginal costs. (See the Academic Plan for the strategic alliance below at part 2 – p188).

- **HEFCE funded programmes**

Currently Westhill College has approximately 2250 students, of which some 850 FTE are HEFCE funded student numbers, most of whom are on full-time programmes. The School of Continuing Studies has 520 FTE currently funded by HEFCE, all on part-time programmes. These total FTEs will be combined and it is intended to seek additional FTEs from HEFCE for part-time provision. Thus the total funded numbers of the new centre are likely to rise to approximately 1650 FTE within a few years. This large number will allow growth into new areas of provision and flexibility in the allocation of programme targets in terms of different modes of delivery (particularly between full- and part-time) and between different subject areas. This will permit flexibility in responding to perceived demands for different programmes or the setting up of initiatives to stimulate new modes of learning or curricula.

Initially the balance between funded full and part-time students will be tipped in favour of full-time study. However, additional student numbers and adjustments within the current allocation can be used flexibly to alter this balance. Current trends, even among full-time students towards *de facto* part-time study, suggests that this balance should move towards a majority of student numbers being allocated to part-time programmes. The speed of this change will depend upon a number of factors, but within 5 years could result in a balance of approximately 60/40 in favour of part-time students.

- **Non-HEFCE funded programmes**

In addition to these HEFCE funded undergraduate numbers it will also be necessary to grow the number of students on self-financing programmes and on post-graduate programmes. The latter will include an expansion of taught masters programmes and part-time postgraduate research programmes. Self-financing programmes will include an expansion of short and residential courses aimed at a general public audience and of continuing professional development (CPD) programmes for specific client groups. The volume of all this non-HEFCE funded activity will depend upon maintaining a balance between opportunities and costs. These are likely to change rapidly as programmes grow and decline in popularity and as external economic factors, which affect client groups, fluctuate. Westhill has recently developed a large overseas programme with over 1500 students registered as distance students in Israel and Africa and India.

Implementation of a learner centred approach

The strategy of the centre will be to build upon the current strengths of both Westhill College and the School of Continuing Studies, adapting and widening practices which currently encourage participation in the widening participation and lifelong learning arenas, and developing initiatives which address new opportunities or tackle perceived problems.

Diversity of programme types

The full range of programme types will be employed. As part-time programmes these will range from non-accredited short courses, through individual accredited modules, short programmes leading to named awards, to undergraduate and post-graduate degree programmes.

There will be an emphasis upon programmes leading to named awards at each academic level, and these will have different entry and exit points. Programmes leading to named awards will employ basic building blocks of 10, 20 or 30 credit modules grouped into 60 credit blocks or multiples of 60 credits. The full range of programmes leading to named awards will include, for example, Certificate (60 credits @ level 1), Cert HE (120 credits @ level 1), DipHE (240 credits @ levels 1 and 2), Advanced Certificate (60 credits @ level 3), BPhil (120 credits @ level 3).

The balance of these programmes will be regularly reviewed bearing in mind existing and developing markets. This will require the adoption of a culture of continuous review and change of academic programmes. There will be an emphasis within the part-time provision of programmes which are regarded as 'core'. This is essential in order to take advantage of recently announced funding initiatives for part-time students. These are likely to make available bursaries and access funds only to part-time students who are enrolled on programmes leading to the award of a minimum of 60 credits per year. However, in order to provide a diversity of study opportunities, and to provide entry routes into core programmes, a balance of short accredited programmes and of more substantial programmes will be essential. Initially the balance of short to core part-time programmes will be 30:70. This balance will be regularly reviewed.

In addition to this range of programmes which employ the university-wide modular scheme, which is becoming established nationally, it will be necessary to provide other short-non-accredited courses. Such courses can act as programmes which bring new client groups into accredited study or fulfil aims aspired to in the traditions of liberal adult education. The School of Continuing Studies' experience is that the latter programmes can be made self-financing and can act as valuable precursors to, or extensions of, study on accredited programmes. Modules which bring new client groups into general level 1 accredited study, or into specific accredited programmes as part of *Widening Participation* initiatives, usually require subsidies or bursaries to reduce fees and it will therefore be necessary to locate particular funds for this purpose.

Diversity of programme content

Perhaps the greatest challenge for the new centre in the delivery of *The Learning Age* agendas is in the construction of short-courses, modules and programmes which serve to attract a non-traditional audience into both full and part-time study at HE level. However, both Westhill and Continuing Studies have considerable expertise in developing curricula which are innovative and attractive to new audiences. One of the initial benefits of the new grouping will be the development of new programmes, or alternative pathways combining elements of existing programmes and modules which can lead to a range of new awards. There will also be valuable opportunities to employ existing modules in new ways to reach different client groups through different time tabling, modes of delivery or location of delivery.

Flexibility of programme delivery

An important element in achieving the aims of widening participation in higher education is in the provision of programmes which are available when and where part-time students are able to attend. It will be essential that this ethos is embodied within the new centre. It must be possible to make courses available within a 12 hour day, 6 or 7 days a week, and for up to 50 weeks per year. Thus modules will need to be delivered in the morning, afternoon and evenings and at weekends, whenever client groups find it convenient for them to attend. It will be necessary to consider teaching modules which are part of full-time programmes outside of what are currently regarded as normal undergraduate teaching hours in order that a wider group of people can attend part-time. This flexible timetabling inevitably leads to diverse work patterns for full-time academic staff but a sensible system of *in lieu* time management can ensure that programmes are delivered when students are able to attend. Furthermore, the centre will need to rely upon a range of academic and support staff who are on part-time and hourly paid contracts. Both Westhill and the School of Continuing Studies have considerable experience of effectively working with people on such contracts. Such people are often of very high calibre

and willing to work what are regarded as unsociable hours. However, it is essential that they are not regarded as secondary members of staff but are fully integrated into decision processes and receive developmental support.

While the fundamental features of the centre's teaching will be face-to-face contact between students and their lecturers and tutors, much can be gained by considering other forms of programme delivery using techniques of distance learning and self directed study. Course information can be delivered in a variety of ways using computer based communications technology and the centre will need to develop existing distance learning expertise with Westhill College and explore the full possibilities of these newer modes of delivery, mainly as an adjunct to direct contact. Thus, while students would maintain close contact with academic staff, an increasing percentage of their study could be self directed, guided by modern communications technology. A range of such technologies and expertise are now available within the University of Birmingham through both Information Services (IS) and a newly established facility in the School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering. The new centre should become another source of such expertise employing these new technologies for the delivery of programmes to a new and wider audience. Such technologies are typically expensive to establish and maintain and the resulting products, while of high quality, are often expensive to prepare and deliver. A particular challenge will be to fund facilities and to produce new technology assisted materials at a price which is sensible for attracting new client groups. It is recognised that initially there may be insufficient expertise within the new centre and that new staff may need to be brought in, as well as new equipment.

Flexibility of student progression routes

The modular organisation of learning within HE permits the possibility that students can personally measure and pace their progress through programmes of learning. Students can also piece together alternative and personalised progression routes towards the attainment of a particular award, or control the pace at which credits are accumulated towards awards. It will be necessary therefore to allow for the

possibility of individually planned progression routes while at the same time ensuring that there is adequate coherence in the programmes followed and that students are tracked adequately by an administrative and computer systems which are sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of the centre, its students and the alliance as a whole. The key to successfully employing flexible programmes, while at the same time ensuring academic coherence, is to have clear progression routes with clear choice points which can support the thinking student and place more of the power over curricula choice with the learner. The system must allow sufficient flexibility for negotiating progression routes for individual students whose aspirations or life circumstances change. Such flexibility must, however, be supported by an adequate support and guidance service for students (see below).

An additional aspect of progression will be the need for the alliance to work with academic schools across the university to either negotiate progression routes into existing full-time programmes for individual students who commence their studies with the new centre, or to encourage and advise schools to open their programmes adequately to part-time students. The former type of progression route already exists in that students completing certain part-time certificated HE programmes with the School of Continuing Studies can progress to full time study on degree programmes in archaeology, English and history. Such progression routes should become a model that is more widely adopted across the university.

High quality student support and guidance

Experience within Westhill College and the School of Continuing Studies, and elsewhere already indicates that students from non traditional backgrounds, those who study while in work, and those with disabilities frequently encounter a range of problems which require a supportive and flexible response to their problems. Students with disabilities, those new to HE from non-traditional backgrounds, or those returning to study after a long break, may require particularly frequent contact and support both before and during their period of study. The REACHOUT project

in East Birmingham has shown the value of coherent support as a way of bridging new client groups back into education and from FE into HE. A dedicated service which can be contacted through a number of routes at different times of day, which can inform people of what lies ahead of them, steer them through choices and opportunities, assist in obtaining funding for study and assist in finding support for particular disabilities, will be essential in fulfilling *The Learning Age* agendas. There will also be a need for short courses and training exercises addressing learning and study skills which students may need to take before and during programmes. Such courses will need to be supported by suitable materials. To ensure that such initiatives happen, and are to a high quality, staff with a specific role in these areas will be essential. As in the case of developing new technologies for guiding students' learning, there may be insufficient expertise within the new centre and new staff may need to be brought in. Funding such a development may require additional sources and these will need to be actively sought, perhaps in collaboration with other organisations, including charities, who represent the interests of particular socially excluded groups.

Of particular importance will be the level of information services support. The centre will need a dedicated library and IT service which can meet the study needs of part-time students who may attend courses only intermittently, for example at weekly or monthly intervals, or exclusively at weekends. Although information services are always likely to be over stretched in a university the size of Birmingham, it is recognised that part-time students cannot compete equally with full-time students for the same facilities. Therefore a dedicated library and IT service, which can also provide services for students studying remotely from Birmingham, is essential. This has been achieved by the School of Continuing Studies but only at the expense of having to finance and manage its library independent of the main IS which serves all other students. Clearly the new Learning Resource Centre at Westhill provides an opportunity for a service for non-traditional students to be established with service level agreements dedicated to the needs of a specific clientele.

Flexibility of programme entrance requirements

Concomitant with the diversity of programme types and contents there will be a need to take a flexible approach to programme entry requirements. The School of Continuing Studies has considerable experience of providing level 1 programmes with open entry for mature students, i.e. no prior academic qualifications. At higher levels of study it will be necessary to employ techniques which acknowledge prior learning through, for example, work experience or voluntary activities which can be considered equivalent to academic achievement. The essential aim of this flexibility is to allow all people who can benefit from study on a programme to do so, regardless of whether they have been able to demonstrate this through achievement in other systems of learning. However, to operate such an open and flexible system is both time consuming and expensive for both the prospective student and the institution. It typically requires personal interviews with prospective students and the preparation of written materials or portfolios which can attest to their personal abilities, motivation and readiness to study at a particular level. Dedicated staff who can build upon experience of successfully judging the academic equivalence of prior experience and of qualification equivalence, as well as make judgements on borderline cases, will be essential. Staff development in these areas, especially where they involve consideration of students with disabilities will be essential.

Diversity of learning assessment procedures

The assessment of learning through examinations is rarely appropriate for part-time and mature students. The modular scheme allows learning outcome to be assessed regularly through a student's career. The new centre would ensure that a wide range of assessment procedures are employed, guided by the principle that the assessment procedure should be tied to the learning aims of the module and programme. As in other aspects of the approach of the new centre, these continuous and mainly non-examination based systems, are more time consuming to administer, record and ensure quality and equality. Staff who can cope academically and administratively

with the complexity of these procedures, and a system of external examination which can advise constructively on assessment problems, will be essential.

Collaborative arrangements

Irrespective of its size and expertise the new centre cannot of itself ensure that the ideals of *The Learning Age* become reality. There need to be significant shifts in funding and the establishment of a new ethos which engenders a motivation to enter into formal education at different times throughout an individual's life. There are indications from government that funding changes which make it easier for part-time students to fund their studies will be introduced. However, it will be necessary for the centre to seek funds for particular initiatives. Other important developments can only come by working closely with organisations which represent the interests of individuals and groups who do not currently benefit from HE and with other providers of training and education throughout the region. The range of relevant organisations with which to collaborate is extremely wide. It would include educational providers (including schools, sixth-form colleges, further education colleges, other universities and the WEA), community and religious groups, voluntary organisations, employers of all sizes, and local government organisations including the soon to be established Regional Development Agency. Clearly, the new alliance will need to choose its alliances carefully for fear of over stretching its resources and not being able to deliver its own part of any partnership arrangements. Partnerships in this area of educational collaboration are often difficult and it will be necessary to ensure that the terms of any partnership or collaborative arrangements are explicit. The eventual aim would be to grow the achievements and reputation of the new centre and the university so that new ideas for partnerships and alliances which further the widening provision and lifelong learning agendas would be generated as much from outside bodies as from the university itself.

Rapid response to demands for new programmes

It would seem axiomatic that an organisation dedicated to a learner centred approach in its teaching must be able to respond rapidly to new initiatives. Opportunities to take advantage of new sources of funding for serving the needs of new and non-traditional client groups, could be transitory. Students whose learning expectations have been raised may move on to other providers if the new centre cannot respond rapidly to their needs. Further, it should be borne in mind that other organisations in the region will also be keen to push forward on *The Learning Age* agendas and a competitive market for new students could develop. Thus the need to respond rapidly in devising new curricula and transforming these into modules and programmes, while working within the university quality assurance procedures, will present a challenge for the centre and for the university's central administrative services and quality assurance procedures.

Flexible use of funding mechanisms

The range of funding mechanisms currently available to widening participation and lifelong learning in HE are rather limited. There are signs, however, that funding for a new range of initiatives will come through HEFCE and that the DFEE will make Access and perhaps other funds available for part-time study. It will be necessary to take full advantage of these schemes and ensure that they are used well to provide an adequate return. At the same time it will be necessary to take initiatives, to seek new funds from charitable organisations, and provide clear information to existing or potential students as to sources of financial support for which they will be eligible.

Delivery of programmes at centres throughout the West Midlands region

The School of Continuing Studies has always served a regional clientele by providing individual modules and programmes in towns and villages throughout the West Midlands region. Westhill, similarly has served a large number of students

across the greater Birmingham conurbation. Outside of Birmingham there has in recent years been an emphasis upon provision of continuing education in the county towns of Shrewsbury, Hereford and Worcester. This regional outlook has been important in confirming the university's commitment to its region and in forming alliances with regional organisations. It also provides links through which part-time students from beyond commuting distance of the university can gain access to its resources. With the development of computer based communications it should be possible to extend the range of opportunities for study remote from the campus through a mixture of face-to-face, video, and other computer-aided communication systems. As remarked above the development and use of these modern means of communication are expensive and potentially time consuming although the volume of use can justify the expenditure over a period of time. However, collaboration with other providers in the use of such technologies, and in the use of teaching facilities remote from the campus, can maintain costs to a manageable level and well serve *The Learning Age* agendas in bringing the expertise of a major university into areas remote from its campus.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programmes

The development of CPD programmes will be a key to fulfilling the lifelong learning aims of the new centre. Through CPD programmes people are brought back into contact with HE throughout their working lives, and in the context of a research-led university, frequent contact with new thinking in professional areas of work would seem most appropriate. Both Westhill and the School of Continuing Studies already have experience in these self-financing areas of provision. Furthermore, there are a significant number of CPD programmes provided in other parts of the University of Birmingham. Thus considerable expertise exists to ensure that the centre becomes a focus of CPD growth and co-ordination across the university. To achieve this it will be necessary to focus on particular market sectors where the centre, perhaps in collaboration with schools across campus, can develop a strong profile of short and longer courses. At this time the School of Continuing Studies has particular experience of working with public sector professionals, with

voluntary sector managers, and in dual accreditation i.e. providing university accreditation in addition to professional awards for particular groups. The latter has particular value for clients who wish to develop their own personal development profile through the accumulation of HE credits outside of the narrower confines of their professional qualifications.

The School of Continuing Studies also has particular expertise in training needs analysis in public sector organisations and this could be extended to the commercial sector to help develop profiles of client group developmental needs. Accrediting portfolios of achievement attained through work, as well as work based learning in both small and large enterprises are other areas where expertise already exists.

However, despite this strength in CPD work much of it is uncoordinated and does not necessarily make contact with similar or allied work in other parts of the university or related institutions. To capitalise on this expertise and its potential growth within the West Midlands region and beyond, and to ensure that it exploits all of the flexibility and diversity described above, requires clear co-ordination. A centre of expertise in CPD programmes within the new alliance centre reaching throughout the university would provide a clear focus for lifelong learning within the context of the world of work. This would complement the emphasis upon personal development, both within and outside the world of work, which would be the focus of the widening provision and lifelong learning activities of the main HEFCE funded provision of the centre.

Marketing and Publicity

In fulfilling *The Learning Age* agendas the new centre will need constantly to develop new programmes and to attract new groups of students to study on them. There will be a need to grow markets as well as respond to detected demand. Some programmes will succeed by being aimed at particular niche markets and other programmes will be generated by negotiation with new client groups. Such activities require a thorough understanding of potential markets and how they change. This

knowledge should support both academic developments and guide the production of focused publicity materials. On some occasions such material will need to be produced and distributed at relatively short notice. While it will be necessary for this material to be recognisable as originating from the University of Birmingham and Westhill, and hence gain the benefits of the 'dual' corporate identity, it will also be necessary to ensure that materials appeal to particular groups. To achieve this understanding of markets, and to be able to proceed both rapidly and flexibly in the production of materials, the new centre will require its own marketing and publicity office.

Evaluation, Research and Management

The picture drawn above is of a new centre which is dynamic and proactive simultaneously upon a number of fronts. To move towards the aims of *The Learning Age* requires many initiatives and some no doubt will be more successful than others. Priorities will have to be set and opportunities taken as they arise. There is a danger under these conditions of the centre losing its focus and fragmenting. To prevent this, clear management which maintains an overall focus and direction, while allowing new developments, will be essential. Equally essential will be mechanisms to both evaluate initiatives and underpin them with theoretically sound research which takes a wider perspective. Thus, a Lifelong Learning Evaluation and Research Unit will be both desirable and necessary, perhaps initially employing a small number of academic staff who can guide the collection of data on new projects and their evaluation. This small team should be able to grow its expertise and reputation to attract outside funding for research fellows and research students who can start to build a sound educational base for future developments.

Part 2: Outcomes and Products

Four outcomes of the processes and developments dealt with previously are outlined in this section of the explication. The progress and development of the CLL is highlighted; the two successful Westhill initiatives in widening participation are described; a successful research and development partnership with Staffordshire University is adumbrated; and the Academic Plan for the strategic alliance between Westhill and the University of Birmingham is outlined. Each of these can be said to be an outcome and product of the streams of work and thinking described and developed in previous sections of the explication. In one sense they are the continuing reality of the project itself and are thus work in progress, whilst in another sense they are the products of this D.Prof. module – DPS 5120 - which is both a recording of certain professional capabilities and contributions to the work of the author's organisation and profession and a development of Westhill's corporate capabilities as it enters a new era in its almost 100 years of existence.

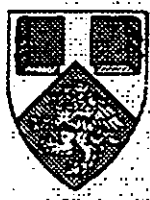
Progress of the CLL (with Anita Pickerden, Director of the Westhill Centre for Lifelong Learning).

The Centre came into being in April 1998 following a six month development phase led by the Westhill Deputy Principal and aided and supported by the Principal and Business Manager of the College. Anita Pickerden, a qualified lawyer and management studies lecturer was appointed CLL Director with effect from July 1998. All staff were appointed to the CLL on two year contracts, supported by a pump priming allocation of £300,000 from the Westhill College Trustees. As the CLL entered its second year of operations at April 1999 it could point to a number of successes and achievements, the most significant of which was the delivery of a new curricular mission for the College which is described in Phase 1, part 2 of the explication. Its significance was enhanced by the onset of the proposals for the strategic alliance, which were mooted during the genesis phase of the CLL.

In essence, the CLL was remitted to help devise and to be primarily responsible for what became known as the 'dynamic curriculum'. This refers to a raft of curricular innovations and organisational systems to support their development which are analysed in Phase 1, part 2 of this explication. The detailed exposition of the CLL's work and mission can also be partly understood through its marketing materials, some of which are contained in Appendix 2. Two significant strands of work were proposed – an industry-based scheme for work-related learning and a community-based scheme intended to promote off-campus learning and the recognition of sites of learning. Both strands were to draw upon common methodological approaches to learning and were to utilise the range of accreditation procedures and methods which the Deputy Principal of Westhill had secured through the extension of accreditation with the University of Birmingham prior to the launch of the CLL. These included major new degree awards in Combined Studies and a comprehensive AP(E)L proposal covering personal, professional and work-based learning. By October 1998 the Director of the CLL was able to report on a range of programmes, successfully begun and covering part-time personal learning within the new Combined Studies programmes, an APEL toolkit widely disseminated within Westhill's partnership organisations, credit mapping for local industry-based clients and a range of community initiatives concerned with widening participation.

What follows is compilation of three short reports (pages 165-177 below) drafted by the Deputy Principal and the CLL Director, working directly to the Deputy Principal. The reports contain details on progress at October 1998, January 1999 and March 1999. A fourth element is added with the Strategy document for the CLL which encapsulates the Centre's mission and objectives. These point to the fulfilment of the 'Dearing Agenda' objectives set for Westhill's role in the strategic alliance with the University of Birmingham and to the centrality of the dynamic curriculum concept for Westhill's understanding of lifelong learning.

The reports are simultaneously the expression of short-term achievement for the goals set in Phase 1 of the project and an indication of aspiration for future work.



Westhill College of Higher Education

**Centre for
LIFELONG
LEARNING**

Progress Report on Developments in Part time Learning as at October 1998

David Davies, Deputy Principal.

1. Learning for Life part time short courses

The part time programme has commenced with much interest generated by our three open evenings. Useful lessons have been learned to guide our promotional activity for January. Several members of the teaching staff have generously given time and support to assist CLL in the setting up of this programme, together with useful and constructive feedback to inform future action.

Two new Combined Studies degree level courses are running; Learning from Experience (Monday) and Internet Searching and Resource Application: An Introduction (Tuesday). Each course has 11 regular attendees. In addition, a range of students are infilling onto other part time courses, such as counselling and youth work.

2. Professional learning

- Classroom assistants (26 in total). A number of these have enrolled on the Learning from Experience course. Roger Woods, Dean of Professional Studies, is overseeing APEL with the assistants, many of whom anticipate entering teacher training courses in the near future.
- The part-time Counselling (Modular programme) and Youth and Community Studies courses have commenced successfully.

- Training for school governors – Chris Szwed is working with the Head of Governor Training in Birmingham and with Dawn MacCracken of Birmingham TEC to gain funding for those joining the scheme which will provide training and accreditation. CS is hoping to meet with around 60 governors in November to discuss the scheme, which has a proposed start date of January 1999.
- West Midlands Police – a recent meeting with the head of the Employee Development and Training Department has led to a request for accreditation of all police based and civilian learning activity. A proposal, with costings, is being drawn up for their approval.
- CLL is participating with Westhill College in the Job Scene exhibition to be held at the National Indoor Arena on 15, 16 and 17 November. This will provide useful opportunities to make contact with the major employers in the West Midlands.
- The Coventry childcare assistants' course, which leads to credit within Combined Studies modules at the College, began in September. It is anticipated that a cohort will gain a Certificate in Childhood Studies.

1. APEL

An APEL toolkit developed at the College is being widely used in accreditation for those studying towards both BA Humanities and Combined Studies courses, and CLL has been able to contribute towards making modularised courses more flexible across the whole portfolio of Westhill and Selly Oak Colleges.

2. Work based Learning

Credit mapping has been offered to various local employers, and other organisations, and they are currently considering their options. Follow up visits are being arranged. An event to launch the consortium of trainers, Westhill Consultants (Training and Development), has been arranged for the afternoon of Wednesday 18 November to be held at the Archibald Conference Centre.

Special publicity has been created for distribution to training organisations and the academic staff of Westhill and Selly Oak colleges have been canvassed for additional contacts to the mailing lists being set up.

3. Community Liaison

The Hindu Council of Birmingham and Hindu Women's Network are keen to work with Westhill to secure greater learning opportunities. An ESF Objective 3 bid has been submitted to seek funding for these groups to work with Westhill on a range of management development projects.

4. Overseas

- Israel. Anita Pickerden and Marilyn Miles are currently designing the modules for the BA (Hons) Combined Studies, which will be launched in Israel in late 1998.
- Jamaica. This project to set up video conference links is progressing, and it is hoped to work with further education providers in the Caribbean so that students can progress to higher education courses through Westhill's distance provision.

1. Collaborative project with East Birmingham College.

There has been a productive meeting with EBC staff to discuss Westhill running a variety of HE courses at the Women's Academy in Bordesley Green. A series of subject specific team meetings to sort out details has been scheduled for Westhill and EBC staff.

2. Collaborative work with University of Birmingham

Discussions are continuing with the University regarding a joint Widening Participation bid to the Higher Education Funding Council. If the bid is successful it will help to establish the framework for joint work within the Strategic Alliance between the College and the University.



Centre for Lifelong Learning

Progress Report

As at end of January 1999.

1. Learning for Life part time short courses

The part time programme started in September, and has continued with the following courses in the January intake:

Using the Internet as a Teaching Tool (2 cohorts of 12)

Introduction to English Literature (7)

Introduction to Project Management (8)

Introduction to Psychology (8)

Some students are also in-filling into the full time programmes.

2. Work based learning

The following work based learning activities are currently under development:

Training for school governors

- we are assisting the CPD co-ordinator and conducting a trial of the APEL workbook (funded by Birmingham & Solihull TEC)

West Midlands Police

- following successful preliminary meetings, we are at contract stage. We will be accrediting the main training activities of the uniformed staff, and also working with the civilian staff to enable all concerned to work towards a Combined Studies award. We are discussing the possibilities of jointly accrediting this work with Prof H.Thomas, who is working separately with the National Police Training Department.

Birmingham City Council

- We are working with the Black worker's group of Leisure services to design and accredit a Racial Harassment Advocate training course leading to a 60-credit award.
- We have been asked to accredit the mentoring training conducted by some of Birmingham's black led churches.

Wesleyan Financial Services

- We are working with one of our Westhill Consultants to design and deliver a complete CPD programme for all Wesleyan employees, this will involve the validation of a new pathway, Finance, and new financial practices modules.

3. APL/APEL

APEL workbook and tool kit being prepared for use on the Internet. This is part of a TEC funded project.

4. Credit mapping

This activity is about to start for West Midlands Police, and for some of the activities of our Westhill Consultants.

5. Continuous Professional Development

We are working with the Brooke Advisory Centre to develop a 60 credit course in a new pathway of Health Studies, to enable accreditation to be awarded for sexual health education training. This should be ready for a September start, and will be open to our part time evening learners, as well as teachers and social workers.

6. Training Brokerage

Several trainers and training providers have now joined our consortium called Westhill consultants. We are holding our first event on 3rd Feb with the Head of the Lifelong Learning team of the DFEE talking to some 65 representatives of industry and training providers.

7. Community Liaison

We are the lead partner in the Widening Participation bid with UCE. We will be working with the Women's Academy of East Birmingham College, the Golden Hillock Local Learning Centre, and the Muath Community Centre. This work links closely with a research project with Staffordshire University, where other partners include the Sikh Community and Youth Service, and the Sandwell Afro-Caribbean Development Agency.

Our Islamic Studies lecturer, is now assisting with the BA(QTS) in Islamic studies, but has introduced a link with a college that wants an Access to Islamic studies course – we are working on this with Fircroft College.

We have been invited to work with the Sparkhill Development group, with a potentially large cohort of classroom assistants and parent tutors, who want a Combined Studies degree course delivered in the community.

8. Overseas

The Israel B.Phil, M.Ed., and the BA in Combined Studies are now under way (M. Miles co-ordinating) Programme Leaders and Liaison Lecturers have been appointed to co-ordinate.



Report to Academic Board

by Anita Pickerden, Director - Centre for Lifelong Learning

Progress as at the end of March 1999

The Strategic Plan is attached to this report so that readers may judge for themselves on the progress made. There have been some changes in emphasis of the work of the Centre, brought about by the Strategic Alliance with the University of Birmingham, by some success in the Widening Participation bid and by the success of the supported distance learning programme in Israel.

There have been several staffing changes since the Centre was launched a year ago. Justine Mellor, who was appointed as Programme Manager in April 1998 was moved to the Registry in February 99 to assist with APEL claims. The temporary contract for Marian Jordan, department secretary, was not renewed. David Thompson was appointed in November as Sales Co-ordinator. Mohammed Mukadam was appointed in September as a shared post with RTS, but is now working solely with RTS. Roger Armstrong has been appointed in a consultative capacity to assist with management and finance courses. The post of Programme Manager (Industry) has been advertised and interviews are to be held in mid April. Clerical support is currently provided by a volunteer work experience person and by the generous help of secretaries across the college.

The Centre has commenced activities designed to provide income for the college in a number of ways, setting up in house part time courses, and engaging with employers and community organisations to widen participation in HE.

1. Learning for Life part time short courses

This commenced in a small way in September 1998, with two separate classes and a number of individual students infilling onto our full time programme. Four separate groups started in January, and we are hopeful that this will continue to expand. It is intended to run a few part time courses after Easter, to enable students to continue to accumulate credit in the Summer term. The courses on offer will include Film Studies, English Literature, Introduction to Psychology, Learning from Experience, Introduction to Study and Research Skills and Introduction to Team Leader Training & Supervisory Management

With regard to the September 99 programme, it would seem sensible to discuss our ideas with Continuing Studies, so as to offer a programme that is complementary rather than competitive. We have agreed to bring our fees into line with the University, which will mean an increase of £2 for a 10-credit module.

By September the following courses should be available to be offered from Westhill:

- a) 60-credit Certificate in Sexual Health Education (in partnership with the Birmingham Brook Advisory Bureau)
- b) 60-credit Certificate in Finance for the Insurance industry (in connection with KGA Financial College - one of our Westhill Consultants)
- c) 60-credit Certificate in Sales and Marketing (again, with one of our Westhill Consultants - Key Business Improvement)

2. Work based learning

The design and delivery of a CPD programme with Wesleyan Assurance has been slightly delayed, but an application to the TEC for funding has been submitted. A similar programme has been designed for another Birmingham based insurance group, and a further funding application has been made for this work.

We have been approached by Gloucester County Council to look at the design of a work-based scheme, probably fitting in with their NVQ4 in Management.

We have received an order for some in house training of 10 graduate trainees at Fujitsu. This will take place over the next few months, and will be followed by our credit mapping some of their other training activity.

We are working with the Black worker's group of the City Council Leisure services to design and accredit a Racial Harassment Advocate training course, which will lead to a 60-credit award.

Other employers are starting to contact us for information about work based training, following our various publicity activities.

3. APEL / APL

The APEL workbook is now on our web-site (funded by Birmingham & Solihull TEC). We are looking at the various options for putting the Learning from Experience module onto the Internet - these options include COSE and WebCT.

We will be offering the Learning from Experience module again in April, as well as running workshops for various employers who want their employees to get started on lifelong learning.

It is likely that most of our Israeli students will wish to claim APEL, and we have been setting up the systems to cope with the increased demand.

4. Credit Mapping

We now have a firm contract with West Midlands Police to begin a credit mapping exercise of some of their courses. We will be working with them to offer additional modules to create 60-credit certificate programmes for their Tutor Constables, OCU Trainers and also the Custody Officers. There is also a separate contract with Midlands Regional Police Training, to accredit their Sergeants Training programme.

We have been asked to work with the New Testament Church of God to accredit their mentoring courses. This may involve some course delivery.

5. Continuous Professional development

The work here includes

- assisting with the School Governors' training programme;
- discussions with RAMP regarding CPD for community and youth workers;
- discussions with the North East Training Group of Coventry Community Education on accreditation of NVQ4 Care candidates

6. Westhill Consultants

In November 1998 we launched our consortium of independent trainers and consultants who wished to work with us and deliver accredited courses to their clients. A few individuals joined up immediately, and this is continuing to grow, with a further organisation joining very recently. We are still following up our launch with contact to those who expressed interest.

We organised a very successful event on February 3rd, when Derek Grover, head of the DFEE Lifelong Learning Team, and the Training manager for Birmingham Chamber of Commerce spoke about Lifelong Learning. Some 60 people attended, providing us with excellent customer information as well as raising our profile in the business community. The entire event cost less than £300 to arrange, and has already shown results in enquiries for credit mapping and for Conference bookings.

7. Community work

a) Courses in the community

We have secured agreement to offer two separate full time degree courses in Childhood Studies, both to commence in September. These are at the Womens' Academy, Bordesley Green and at Anderton Park School as part of the Sparkhill parents' partnership community project. There will probably be about 15 students in each cohort. Jean Mills will be receiving support from CLL to run these. There will also be a cohort of part time students at Anderton Park School, supported by the LEA and various head-teachers. There will probably also be additional part time provision at the Womens Academy.

b) Research projects

Widening Participation: our project with UCE is going well, and we have conducted research at the Women's Academy, Golden Hillock Local Learning Centre, the Sikh Youth & Community Association, the Muath Trust and the 524 Centre (which is attached to South Birmingham College). There will be a dissemination meeting on Tuesday 27th April at our Conference Centre (paid by UCE). This will commence at 12.30 with lunch, and the meeting itself will begin at 1.45.

Staffordshire University: our project with Staffordshire is based upon the same organisations, and is looking at ways of providing and evaluating distributed learning in these community groups. If we use Staffordshire's COSE programme this may prove to be too expensive, so we are looking at alternatives.

We will be involving ourselves in the college research department, and have agreed to contribute to the lunchtime discussions on research projects, which has been set up by Maxine Rhodes.

8. Overseas work

The Israel programme has become a large part of the Centre's work, as the majority of the Israel students are taking the BA Combined Studies programme. This work involves providing programme leadership and administration of the second marking procedures.

9. Work within Westhill College

The Centre is fully involved in the work of the college, taking part in both School Boards and committee work, and offers assistance to individuals and departments when requested to do so. We have taken part in open days and promotional activities for the college as a whole, and for departments and courses.

Widening Participation

As an intrinsic part of the development of its curricular strategy Westhill submitted a bid to the HEFCE under the 1998 Widening Participation: Special Funding Programme 1998/99 [see Appendix 4, document(s) A (i), A (ii) and A (iii)]. This initiative, involving the University of Central England and FE providers was led and written by the Deputy Principal. The bid was in effect a direct descendent of the thinking and conceptual work outlined in Phase 1, parts 1 and 2 of the explication. It envisaged a major collaborative project with several themes and case studies designed to demonstrate the need for widened access and to sponsor in a practical way a research base for the dynamic curriculum idea. It was also designed to lead to the actual provision of courses in 1999. A key to its significance for Westhill lay in the action research and case studies which are reported in Phase 2 above. At the time of writing full implementation is not possible as the project bid has run less than half of its allotted time scale. However, it is possible to report the successful generation of external funds of £40,000 for the project and subsequent success for the University of Birmingham/Westhill bid to HEFCE for additional funded part-time places for 1999-2000. This latter bid (contained in full at Appendix 4, document B) was written jointly by the Deputy Principal of Westhill and the Head of the University's School of Continuing Education. Central to the bid proposal was the intent to generate a learning network in Birmingham and the implementation of the dynamic curriculum. The successful outcomes of these bids are contained in the official HEFCE reports at Appendix 4, documents C and D.

Perhaps the most significant result of Westhill's efforts at deepening access and widening participation came with the announcement of additional funded places by the government in March 1998. The University of Birmingham and Westhill together were awarded 248 funded places. This signalled support from HEFCE for Westhill's growth, since the funding council had approved earlier proposals for the strategic alliance which placed Westhill at the heart of the proposals for expanded provision. The bid itself contained substantial reference to both the dynamic curriculum and the notion of a learning network embracing FE and community providers. This represented an entirely new direction for mainstream University of Birmingham

provision. At the time of writing this explication it is too early to report on the delivery outcomes for this provision. Nevertheless the foundations for a shift in both Westhill's status and position and in the consciousness of its alliance partner have been laid and this represents an achievement for all of those involved.

The widening participation schema outlined above also involves a significant technical dimension. Three outreach centres in Birmingham, which have been designated within the project as sites of learning, are to be linked to Westhill through a web-based environment. Two software support packages designed to facilitate such work have been trialled. The first version – COSE – developed by Staffordshire University proved, initially, to be less than wholly satisfactory. A second version WebCT – is currently being tested. Both packages are evaluated in technical and outline pedagogical terms in a memorandum commissioned by the Deputy Principal from the Head of Westhill Information Technology and Computer Services (WITCS). This report is at Appendix 4, document E.

Towards a network of learning

The concept of a network of learning has occurred already at several points within the explication. The overall project had at its centre the creation of new learning opportunities and organisational frameworks through the Centre for Lifelong Learning. This preceded the creation of the strategic alliance but became central to the evolving alliance itself. At the heart of the alliance was (and is still) the development and delivery of the Dearing (1997) agenda. This in addition to the Kennedy (1998) and Fryer (1998) reports has provided a thread of concern which has illuminated the national policy agenda, leading to the Labour Government's 'The Learning Age' (1998). Westhill's concern for widening participation action was refracted through the idea of a cluster of learning sites (reported at Phase 2, part 3) which were designated as being 'special' to Westhill and which were to provide the focus for the action research elements of the whole project reported at Phase 2, part 6.

The original core concept concerned the idea of designated 'sites of learning' which would be developmental nodes or components of an extended partnership based

around the higher education accreditation possibilities available through Westhill. The dynamic curriculum was however discovered, as it were, in the process of Westhill's need to develop a more powerful expression of partnership for learning as it entered the strategic alliance with the University of Birmingham. The Westhill team discovered the dynamic curriculum in practice as it is described in the successful bids for widening participation and for additional (access) places reported earlier. The dynamic curriculum was the generation of new forms of access, new types of learning and the emergence of new awareness of the force of lived experience, especially that related to faith and ethnicity. It was discovered that there was a dynamic curriculum wherever **nodes of learning** could be brought into alignment with an open and accessible form of higher education. In fact, the dynamic part of the curriculum development process was the bringing of existing practice into awareness and consciousness. The Centre for Lifelong Learning was crucial in this since it was node or cluster of learning opportunities in itself and was a 'point of condensation' where models, theories and practices could re-invent themselves as part of an energised shared learning project.

The network of learning has come into actual existence in 1999 and due to the benign interventions of the HEFCE (with funds for development) has a practical and professional agenda to deliver. Its future success, it is hoped, will be judged outside this project, however, those responsible for its work anticipate that such positive judgements will be against the original prospectus for the network drafted in 1998 by the Westhill Deputy Principal and reproduced here below:

A network of learning – a prospectus statement

The issues raised by the challenges of lifelong learning and widening participation together with the potential of technology have opened up the opportunity to explore 'provider side' issues which influence access to HE by under-represented groups. Developmental work arising from access projects, adult education and new systems of 'open learning' has identified a need to review HE curricula in terms of content as well as modes of delivery. The intention of the network of learning is to recognise

innovative learning in practice, involving community learning partnerships and local employers who are sites of knowledge extension and construction.

Aims of the network of learning:

- *to develop lifelong learning;*
- *to widen participation in HE and target under represented groups;*
- *to open up new routes to HE using new technology;*
- *to identify and create pathways within a unified credit framework;*
- *to create new forms of partnership which will generate new knowledge and recognise emergent forms of learning.*

Provision

The network will emphasise programmes which:

- *do not involve full-time attendance in HE;*
- *are delivered outside main sites (including the home and work place);*
- *can be delivered through and with different media and develop a 'dynamic curriculum', responsive to the needs of individuals and the community;*
- *are inclusive, whilst preserving the highest quality associated with the University of Birmingham and Westhill College.*

Towards a Unified Credit Framework

The network will establish a collaborative learning group which will develop modular blocks of provision within a common credit framework which bridges FE and HE. In the first instance, specific curriculum areas will be highlighted which will be accessible in some way throughout Birmingham, employing outreach, technology and other methods to reach those currently under represented in HE. Maximum flexibility in modes of learning will be developed with a CATs system put in place such that achievement in one organisation can be transferred to another and there is accredited achievement at all levels.

Using Technology

A technology group will be established to explore the potential use of new technology for on-line and distance learning, sharing the experience of FE and HE.

Local and regional industry will be involved to develop distance learning packages and linkages with the UFI and National Grid explored. A primary aim of the group will be to identify provision to be the subject of an initial Web-based and/or electronically delivered programme in 1999/2000.

Communicating with the Market

The network of learning must ensure that the right services and provisions are established to meet the needs of the local community and enable individuals and to be aware of developments taking place. Under-represented groups of learners in Birmingham must be identified, together with their specific needs in terms of skills, content and modes of delivery. A strong identity for the University of Birmingham network of learning must be established, with an appropriate logo, web-site and other publicity materials and it will be necessary to investigate the feasibility of a 'one-stop' single telephone information service to link existing and developing services.

In order for such a network to truly meet the needs of the community which it serves, real co-operative partnerships must be encouraged to develop between local HEIs, FE institutions, schools, libraries, industry and community-based organisations. The network must also have strong links with regional and national initiatives such as UFI and the Digital College. The establishment of such a network will provide for the kind of co-operation between institutions which is innovative and allows for individual growth and community capacity building. Between the institutions involved, the network can be fully inclusive, providing something for everyone, at every level, accessible in some way or other, everywhere.

New partnerships

The development of open access and widening participation at Westhill in 1997/98 led to the construction of a range of activities and partnerships. The dynamic curriculum evolved in this milieu as a form of collaborative learning and organisational development. Although new in the Westhill context, this process was of course another confirmation of a more general process of educational and internal change. The dynamic curriculum and its organisational expression, the network of learning, applies and legitimises a range of educational practices that are in fact well established in both Britain and the United States. Bruffe (1995) and Schon (1980 and 1986) for example, have expounded on the relevance of collaborative learning for educational innovation and cultural change and have featured as influences upon this explication, as has the work of Robertson (1994) and Davidson (1994) on credit systems, Teare et al (1998) on on-line and corporate learning and the work of the Middlesex University National Centre for Work Based Learning Partnerships on the intellectual and organisational issues surrounding work-related learning. The Westhill and University of Birmingham alliance was conceived in curricular terms as an arena of convergence in an era when open systems were expanding in higher and further education in Britain and when the significance of debates about modernity and cultural transformations were impacting on the world of higher education. The influences of Habermas (1987), Mezirow (1990) and Giddens (1991 and 1992) can be seen in this explication as can the impact of professional analysis of the 'state of the art' of post-school and continuing education. Watson and Taylor (1998) and Jary and Parker (1998) have been the most recent seminal compilations of ideas grappling with modernism, the post-Dearing agenda and the emergence of new forms of educational opportunity. Their influences are apparent in both the treatment of ideas contained in Phase 1 of the project, and are to a significant degree embodied in the empirical and concrete outcomes reported in Phase 3.

In terms of project outcomes, partnerships have been formed with four further education colleges (City College, Birmingham, Bournville College, South Birmingham College and Solihull College) and a range of nodes or sites of learning. (These are described in particular in Phase 1, part 2 and Phase 2, part 1 of the project). The net

result of this activity will be a learning network with a richly contextualised culture of opportunity, serving local and regional needs. With regard to the Deputy Principal's personal and professional activities, as a more-or-less direct consequence of the research activities dealt with in Phase 2 of the project, he has been able to join an existing cohort of colleagues who are developing lifelong learning, drawing together policy, theory and practice through the publication of a new academic publication. This will be called the *Journal of Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning* and the joint editors will be David Davies of Westhill, Professor David Jary, Head of the Graduate School at Staffordshire University and Maggie Woodrow of the European Access Network. The publicity material describing the conference launch of the journal is attached below in order to better describe this specific outcome of Westhill's professional work during the period of the project. The accompanying letter is appended in order to demonstrate that the Deputy Principal and other Westhill colleagues have submitted pieces for publication under the rubric of widening participation thus showing the extension of concern and commitment well beyond the college's senior management team. Included also as an outcome at Appendix 4, document F is a copy of the journal article written by the Deputy Principal for the first edition of the new journal.



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From the Deputy Principal

Email: d.davies@westhill.ac.uk
Internet: <http://www.westhill.ac.uk>

15 March 1999

Liz Thomas
Graduate School
Staffordshire University
College Road
Stoke on Trent
ST4 2DE

Dear Liz

I attach my promised piece for the Journal on 'Moving on to the Workplace'. It turned out slightly different from the original specification and contains something of a conceptual approach to WBL. I am arguing the case for the significance of WBL and of a constructivist approach. I hope it fits the overall editorial scheme for the first edition. The editorial could point out the paucity of theoretical work on the burgeoning phenomenon of WBL! My piece could be a start to a debate. We could ask how did things get this far without clarity?

I attach also two short pieces from colleagues at Westhill on "practice updates" which have significance within widening participation.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Professor David Davies
Deputy Principal



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Access, the Changing Face of Further and Higher Education & Lifelong Learning

The Launch of the Institute for Access Studies

WEDNESDAY, 28th APRIL 1999

NORTH STAFFORD HOTEL - STOKE ON TRENT

Staffordshire University is pleased to announce a conference to launch its recently established Institute for Access Studies. The one day conference is intended to provide up-to-date information on access issues, to facilitate networking and to encourage participants to develop and extend links with fellow workers and researchers in the field of access. The workshops are intended to cover access issues both from an academic perspective and that of the practitioner, so the conference will appeal to a wide range of interests. The conference will provide an exciting opportunity for participants to find out more about the work which the Institute for Access Studies is undertaking in the areas of widening participation and lifelong learning, linking policy, practice and theory.

Audience:

The expected audience of this conference will be drawn from further and higher education and will include policy makers and managers, academic researchers and practitioners responsible for widening participation and lifelong learning.

Conference fees include:

- Lunch and full refreshments
- Copy of 'The New Higher Education: Issues and Directions for the Post-Dearing University' edited by David Jary and Martin Parker, Bookshop price £20.00.
- Copy of the launch issue of **Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning: The Journal of the Institute of Access Studies and The European Access Network** plus an on-line demonstration of its electronic format.

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The fourth area of work which is claimed as an outcome of the project is that of the **Academic Plan** which was constructed for both of the parties to the strategic alliance. This project is not the place to analyse or report upon the relatively mammoth task of describing the complete strategic alliance which has kept cohorts of academics and officers at work for more than a full year at the point of writing. (See Appendix 3, document 2 for a schematic account of the process at July 1998). However, the Academic Plan for the alliance which follows below was written in part by the Westhill Deputy Principal, as were several of the contributory papers and appendices which make up the draft version of this plan. (At the time of writing it is a draft Academic Plan, which will require scrutiny by academic committees in both Westhill and the University of Birmingham and approval by the Governors and Trustees of Westhill College).

As the draft plan makes clear, it is a working document which ranges across the issues and educational politics of the alliance, not all of which have been resolved. Nevertheless, it contains enough of the descriptive accounts of both institutions to demonstrate the validity of the analysis yielded at Phase 1, part 2 of this explication. This refers mainly to the significance of Westhill's newly defined role **within and for** the whole corporate body of the University of Birmingham in respect of lifelong learning and the post-Dearing agenda. The Plan is included in the text of this explication precisely for this reason. In particular attention is drawn to the proposals for new development which include work-based learning, lifelong learning, expanded student numbers through widening participation initiatives and the strengthening of local links to facilitate the access agenda. One of the appendices to the Plan is in fact the Westhill/University of Birmingham Widening Participation bid to the HEFCE, which itself contains the alliance's commitment to the network of learning and the dynamic curriculum; concepts which were and remain central to Westhill's vision of its own future. The draft plan follows as evidence of outcomes and products of the project, though as has been stated, it represents work in progress and unfinished business at the time of completion and closure for the explication. Appended to the plan for illustrative purposes are 'diagrammatic' representations of the centrality of the plan for future Westhill developments and the actual and potential links between Westhill and the University's School of Continuing Studies.

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

WESTHILL AND CONTINUING STUDIES ACADEMIC PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION

The Academic Plan has been produced by a working group comprising:

Mr P W Denner, (Chair, University of Birmingham)

Prof G R Martin, (School of Continuing Studies, University of Birmingham)

Prof D Davies (Westhill College)

Mrs J Newsome, (Secretary, University of Birmingham)

The remit of the group was to produce a coherent overarching Academic Plan which includes all the related work in the School of Continuing Studies and at Westhill College where collaboration will take place and to ensure that other areas of Westhill and Continuing Studies work are considered. It is also intended that any plan produced is capable of being separated to reflect separate financial interests in the interim.

The group met on 4 occasions and used as a basis for its discussions a document produced and agreed by the two centres entitled 'A Centre of Excellence for The Learning Age'. (Appendix 1) This document was considered by Academic Board on xxxxxx. The discussion has also been informed by the Westhill College Academic Plan, 1997/8 (Appendix 2) and a number of other documents which form appendices where applicable.

Some of the work was delegated to sub-groups who dealt with the following topic areas:

Fees, Marketing and Student Financial Support

Work-Based Learning

Counselling Course provision

Information Technology

Initial Teacher Training

Of these groups, all but the group charged with looking at Initial Teacher Training has met and produced feedback. This is included in the appropriate section in this document. It was not possible to set up the ITT group at this stage.

2. THE CURRENT SITUATION

Course Provision

The School of Continuing Studies specialises in interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary courses which cover a range of courses in subject areas as diverse as Education Studies, Art and Archaeology, Music, Philosophy and Religious Studies, History and Counselling. The School also provides self-funding CPD courses for the voluntary sector and in connection with this work is exploring developments in work-based learning. The majority of the provision is part-time and courses range from PHD, degrees, Certificate in Higher Education through to non-credit-bearing awards. Some courses are offered at teaching centres away from the main campus at Shrewsbury, Hereford and Worcester. Some of the programmes are offered as short courses, day schools and other non-traditional forms of delivery. An important dimension of the work of the School is in the area of flexible study for part-time students which is well-suited to the philosophies espoused in the consultation paper on the Learning Age.¹

¹ *The Learning Age: renaissance for a new Britain*, Stationary Office, 1998 (Cm 3790)

The main focus of Westhill work is on Education, Theology, Humanities, Counselling and Professional Development. Courses range from Certificates for 16 year-olds through degrees to masters awards. Westhill is endeavouring to reduce its dependence on recruitment of full-time students and to this end the College is increasing recruitment to the part-time Combined Studies programme. It is also developing work in the area of Access and Widening Participation within its Centre for Lifelong Learning (Appendix 3). As part of this work, the Centre is also looking at initiatives such as Work-based Learning. The College has a firm commitment to social inclusion.

Whilst there are areas of difference, there are also a number of areas of work where there is convergence of development within the School of Continuing Studies and Westhill. The areas where collaboration could take place are in the development of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary courses which have flexible entry and study modes. Both groups have a strong commitment to recruiting 'non-traditional' students and to flexible learning. These are in the subject areas of the liberal arts, humanities, theology and education. Both groups have developed Masters level counselling courses and are actively pursuing Work-based Learning initiatives as part of Professional Development programmes. The diagram in Appendix 4 sets out the broad areas for collaboration. Work in both centres fits well with the Lifelong Learning and Widening Participation agendas being put forward by the government.

Student Numbers

As at February 1999 Continuing Studies has a total number of 6,136 enrolled students, over half of whom are on HEFCE funded programmes. A full breakdown of the student numbers is given in Appendix 5.

With a total of 2664 students, Westhill College has a larger proportion of full-time students. Of the total, 899 are full-time and 310 are part-time. The remaining students attend distance learning programmes in Israel. A full list of student numbers and courses is given in Appendix 6.

External Links

Both centres actively develop links with FE Colleges. Westhill is a major partner in the Selly Oak Colleges Federation and has a number of other external links. The School of Continuing Studies has also set up collaboration with a number of FE organisations. (David, Graham – do you wish to wish to explain these links in a sentence or two as I don't

really have anything to say here?') A full list of the organisations with which these links is made is given in Appendix 7.

Staffing

A full list of the staff in Westhill and Continuing Studies is given in Appendix 8. Westhill has 43 full-time staff of whom 8 are involved in Teacher Education and 4 in the Centre for Lifelong Learning. There is also a range of fractional posts.

The School of Continuing Studies works with a relatively small core of full-time staff (17) and a number of programme co-ordinator posts. These staff are charged with the development of continuing education. There are also a large number of special lecturers who support the wide-ranging programme. As well as support staff the School also has a number of library staff.

Infrastructure

The School of Continuing Studies is based in Winterbourne house but also uses some room in Education, Arts and Biology. Students tend only to use the Winterbourne Computer Cluster and the School has its own library. The School has retained financial control of its library because of the need to ensure that the service provided matched the particular needs of part-time students. There are also library facilities available on the remote sites. Students enrolling for more than 60 credits are entitled to an ID card which gives them access to the main library and other libraries as appropriate. Summer Schools are held either on-site or in other locations depending on the nature of the course and for this the School has a real need for a range of good quality residential accommodation.

The main teaching for Westhill College is done on its site in Selly Oak. There are three outreach centres at the Golden Hillock Mosque, Handsworth Sikh Community Centre and the East Birmingham Women's College (or Kidderminster?). It also uses Cadbury Hall and Sports facilities which are part of the Selly Oak Colleges Federation. The site comprises a number of different buildings some of which are in need of repair and refurbishment. As well as teaching space, there are a number of residential buildings which are underoccupied. Also on the site is the Orchard Learning and Resource Centre (OLRC)

which offers a very modern learning centre which is capable of being exploited further within the remit of the owners/trustees of the building.

The programmes in Israel are delivered in some 15 centres, largely in the Tel Aviv area.

Fee Structures

Currently the fee structures for part-time students are very similar since Westhill has made a conscious decision to keep its fees in line with those of the University. Both centres are aware of sources of TEC funding and the categories of eligibility. The School of Continuing Studies produces an information sheet which covers all sources of funding for part-time students.

3. PROPOSALS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT

The following proposals have been made in the light of existing provision and in the context of national developments in Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning:

- *Link of Continuing Studies and relevant Westhill provision into a single academic unit*

The Westhill TTA provision would be linked to the School of Education. The opportunities to develop part-time provision link strongly with Continuing Studies. It is proposed that there will be a closer academic liaison, possibly in the form of a single School within five years. The precise mechanisms for the final organisation and the transitional arrangements would require detailed articulation.

- *Move the School of Continuing Studies to the Westhill site*

As indicated above, the maximum benefit can be gained by developing Lifelong Learning and part-time provision within a single school. This may take some time. A first stage in enabling such a development should be a move of Continuing Studies to Westhill.

There is some spare capacity at the Westhill site which could be used to accommodate the School of Continuing Studies. With either new building (the preferred option) or refurbishment of existing buildings, the problems of lack of space and provision for residential courses could be alleviated. The OLRC offers library and learning centre space which is well-suited to the needs of the part-time students in the School and there is also good provision for car parking space which is an important

issue for the type of student which the school attracts. There is also potential to provide more. A draft proposal is included as Appendix 9.

- *Expansion of Student Numbers to support the provision*

A bid has been made to HEFCE for additional student numbers in a number of areas to support Widening Participation and to increase provision below degree level. The subject areas include IT Skills, counselling, management skills, education and core development from HNC to postgraduate level. A full copy of the bid is given in Appendix 10.

- *Centre of Excellence in Counselling*

Discussion is taking place on the co-ordination of the Counselling provision. The two centres currently offer complementary courses which will be offered from a single academic unit which would market the whole provision in a co-ordinated way. This is proposed for the October 2000 intake. The current courses at Westhill College will need to be reviewed and put in a modular format to facilitate the development. Further development of the counselling provision is urgently required to fulfill the proposed HEFCE target numbers. (Is there a written report on this?)

- *Closer collaboration on Combined Studies courses*

The flexible programmes in BA Humanities and BA Combined Studies (Westhill) and the BA in Integrated Studies (Continuing Studies) will explore ways in which closer collaboration will take place. This may take the form of rationalisation of modules or interchange of students between the various modules comprising the awards. A brief exploration has been made of this in the area of English (see Appendix 11, A and B).

- *Collaboration on CPD and Development of Work-based Learning Initiatives*

There are separate developments in the Centre for Lifelong Learning and in the voluntary sector section of Continuing Studies on developing Work-based Learning partnerships within the context of increasing the

flexibility of learning. The two groups have agreed to collaborate and share expertise on good practice. (Appendix 12)

- *Consideration of Continuing Studies Staffing Model*

The School of Continuing Studies has devised a flexible staffing model to enable it to develop new courses initiatives in a wide range of subject areas. It works with a small core of permanent academic staff and a larger number of academic co-ordinators who are employed on fractional contracts. These individuals are appointed as academic advisors and any teaching they do is paid for separately. In addition, there are large numbers of hourly paid staff who make inputs to the teaching. The model allows for the reductions or increases in staffing according to the relative success of the different programmes. It has been proposed that such a model would also facilitate the development work at Westhill particularly in the area of Lifelong Learning.

- *Collaboration on fees, student support and marketing*

It has been agreed to fully harmonise the fee structures for 1999 entry of students if at all possible. This would involve the Westhill part-time fees being increased by a small margin of on a 10 credit module. National provision for funding part-time students is developing and new initiatives being introduced. Both centres currently exploit existing provision from agencies like TEC's to the full. They have agreed to produce a single information booklet for students which will cover this and the new HEFCE support being proposed. (see Appendix 13). As the opportunities arose they would seek means to collaborate on applications for development funding such as European Social Fund initiatives.

- *Development of IT provision and teaching*

The working group identified a split of the proposed additional HEFCE numbers and that there would be a consequent need for additional investment in IT provision. Discussion is also taking place with Information Services with a view to include the existing Continuing Studies provision part of the overall University service.

(Is there a written report for this?)

- *Strengthening local links and facilitating widening participation and access agenda*

The two centres wish to continue to foster their local links and develop these further. This formed part of the initiatives which would be the subject of collaboration on development funding discussed above.

4. SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

The School of Continuing Studies and Westhill College, although apparently different in the patterns of student attendance have a number of congruent areas of work which make them suitable partners in developing a strategy to respond to the national developments in Lifelong Learning and Widening Participation.

The key features of each School which will facilitate such developments are as follows:

- *School of Continuing Studies commitment to continuing education, flexible learning and outreach*
- *Westhill College remit for outreach to disadvantaged groups and social inclusion and partnership with community groups*
- *The development of credit-based modular schemes in both Continuing Studies and Westhill which will allow flexible entry on to courses along with flexible study patterns*
- *Both Continuing Studies and Westhill have experience in teaching in curricula which are multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary*
- *Teaching relating to arts, humanities, religious studies, education and professional development in both Schools which will facilitate collaborative development and possible interchange between course programmes*
- *Specific expertise in Counselling*
- *Developments in CPD and Work-based Learning*
- *Spare capacity at the Westhill site to allow space for development*
- *The OLRC at Westhill which provides a modern learning facility which is suited to the needs of part-time students and outreach development*

The specific proposals which have been agreed are as follows:

- *Link of School of Continuing Studies with those parts of Westhill with a common interest*

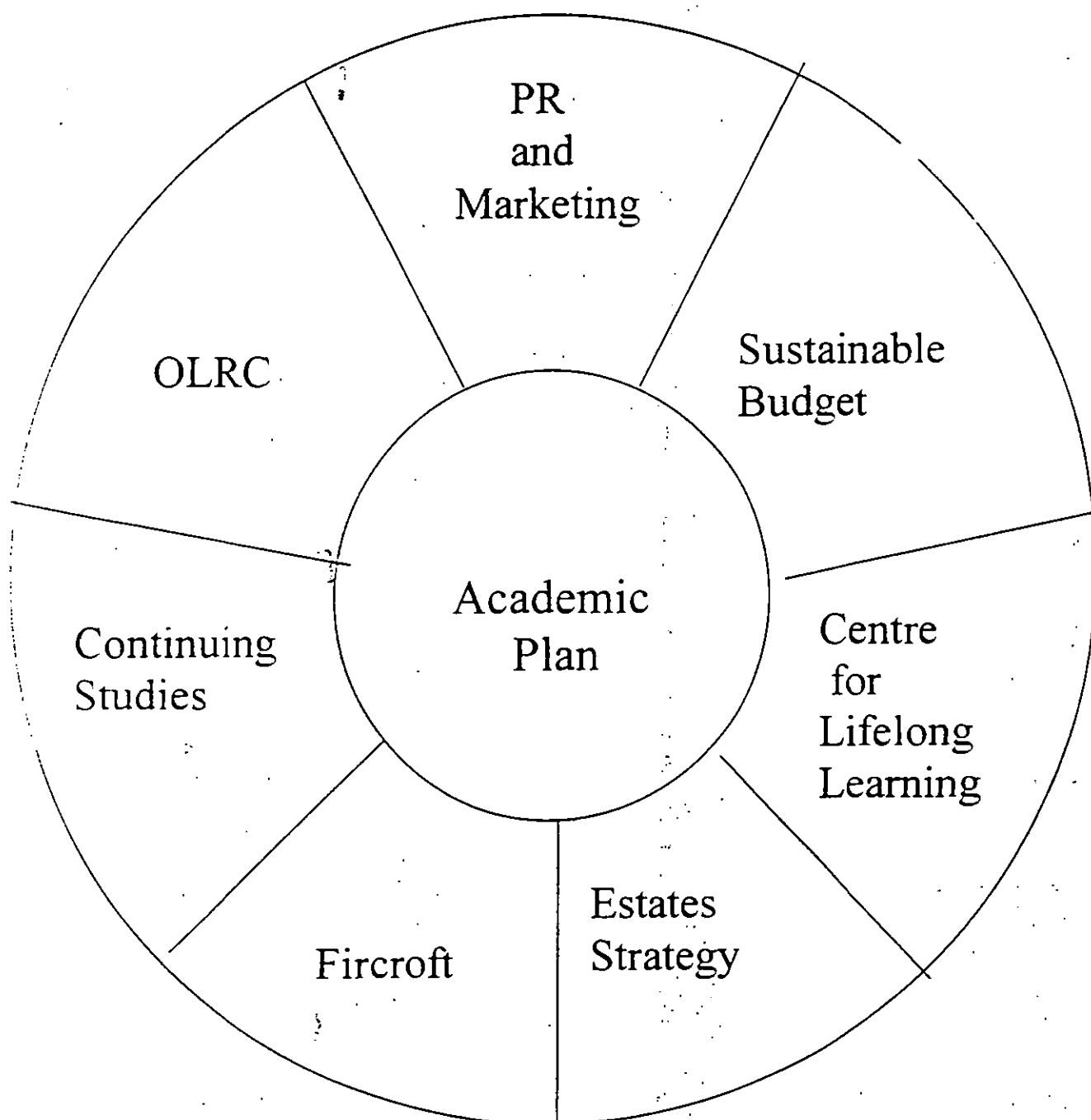
- *Move of the School of Continuing Studies to the Westhill site*
- *Expansion of student numbers in the context of Widening Participation and increasing provision below degree level*
- *Development of a Centre of Excellence in Counselling*
- *Closer collaboration on Combined Studies Courses and possible development of links with related subject areas in other parts of the University*
- *Collaboration on the expansion of Work-based Learning initiatives and Continuing Professional Development*
- *Consideration of the School of Continuing Studies staffing model as a means for aiding the development of new initiatives*
- *Collaboration between the Centre for Lifelong Learning and the School of Continuing Studies in the areas of student support, development of local links and seeking development funding.*

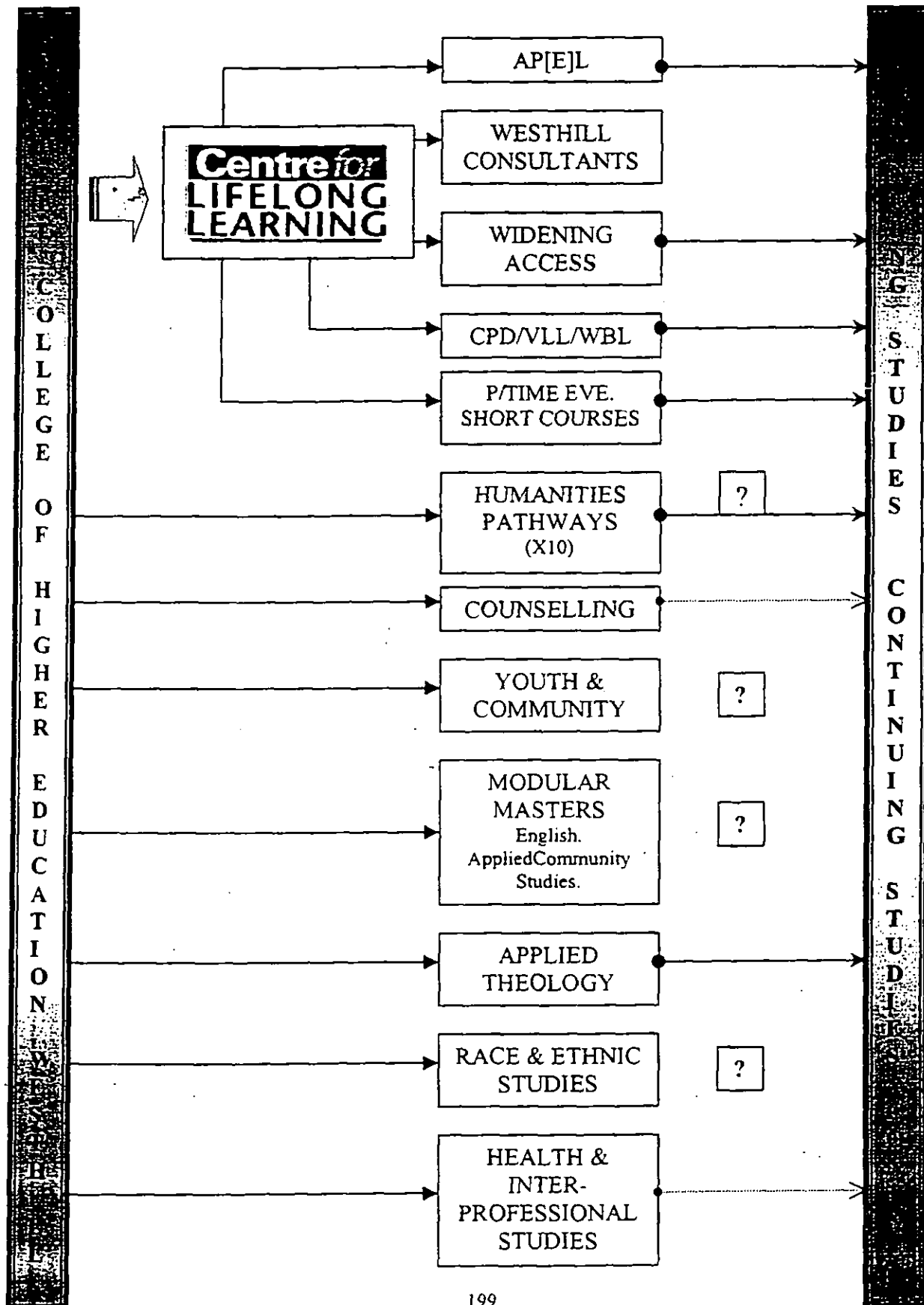
LIST OF APPENDICES

<i>Appendix 1</i>	<i>A Centre of Excellence for the Learning Age</i>
<i>Appendix 2</i>	<i>Westhill College of Higher Education, Academic Plan, 1997/8</i>
<i>Appendix 3</i>	<i>Strategy Document: Centre for Lifelong Learning</i>
<i>Appendix 4</i>	<i>Actual/Potential links – Westhill/Continuing Studies</i>
<i>Appendix 5</i>	<i>Student numbers for the School of Continuing Studies</i>
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<i>Appendix 7</i>	<i>List of links with FE providers</i>
<i>Appendix 8</i>	<i>Staffing numbers</i>
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<i>Appendix 10</i>	<i>Bid to HEFCE for additional student places and funds 1999-2000 for Widening Participation and increasing provision below degree level</i>
<i>Appendix 11, A & B</i>	<i>Model Proposal for English Studies</i>
<i>Appendix 12</i>	<i>Working Group on Work-based Learning</i>
<i>Appendix 13</i>	<i>Working Group on Fees, Marketing and Student Support</i>

Diagram 2 Academic Plan: Centre of all future developments

Academic Plan Centre of all future developments



ACTUAL & POTENTIAL LINKS - WESTHILL/CONTINUING STUDIESWESTHILLSTUDIESB'HAM UNIV.

Part 3: Collaborative Learning – a conclusion not to conclude

1. Delivery on the learning agreement

The Middlesex University agreement for this whole project listed three areas for development – the emergence of learning communities (sites of learning), institutional innovation (for Westhill) through curricular-led change and the exploration of new types and forms of knowledge. The dynamic curriculum was to be conceptualised as a generic theme and the whole project was to draw upon a team-led approach and was to engage with partnership development.

As the project developed over some 18 months (from September 1997 to March 1999) it became clear that what was evolving ^{were} ~~was~~ the vital phases of the dynamic curriculum which themselves were beginning to help shape the discourse surrounding the strategic alliance. What had been originally designated as sites of learning came to be re-conceptualised as 'nodes' within an evolving **network of learning**. A nascent curriculum was discovered wherever the nodes were recognised. The practical expression of this schema is reported in the research material assembled by the team comprising the Westhill Centre for Lifelong Learning. The truly dynamic elements of this discovered curriculum lay in bringing a nascent curriculum into lived practice, a process which by its very nature can have no definitive starting or finishing point. The Westhill centre was crucial because it offered (and continues to do so) models, theories and practical outcomes for learning 'nodes' or 'sites' which can continue to re-invent themselves. An evolving version of 'new knowledge' can be ascertained here involving both theoretical and empirical reference points. It includes:

- **interdisciplinary developments** such as those reported in the programmes associated with the CLL and the emerging curriculum of the strategic alliance dealt with in parts 1 and 2 of Phase 1 of the explication;

- **collaborative learning** of the kind reported in the research phase of the project and exemplified also by the partnerships with a range of further education colleges, community providers and with Staffordshire University. Of particular significance for Westhill is the notion of collaborative learning with those living and working in ethnic and faith communities, illustrated by the successful bids to HEFCE concerned with widening participation and liaison with Muslim communities reported in Phase 2, part 6 and at Appendix 4;
- **modelling learning processes** which take into account the growth and application of 'open systems'. These developments were the basis of the Level 5 APWBL claim which preceded the project explication, and dealt with the application and extension of credit and credit transfer systems, modularisation and the growth of AP(E)L. These open systems are crucial aspects of change based on curriculum innovation and lead directly to the development of the distributed learning reported as part of the project in association with Staffordshire University;
- **managerial problem solving**, of the kind exemplified in the development of the strategic alliance. This process has been underway for approaching one and a half years as this explication is completed. An example of the complexity and range of issues at stake is given in document 2 at Appendix 3 and acknowledgement of the sheer volume of detailed work this involved is accorded to the Business Manager at Westhill, John Walmsley. The Senior Management Team at Westhill, which includes the Deputy Principal, carried through a multitude of tasks which are beyond the scope of this explication to describe, nevertheless without whose contributions the curricular innovations reported here would not simply have been possible. The strategic alliance, reported at Phase 1, part 2 and in Phase 3 part 1 has undoubtedly been a managerial imperative throughout the whole project;
- **cognitive gains** – concerned most directly with the conceptualisation of the dynamic curriculum and the network of learning which have both become enshrined in the new University of Birmingham, Westhill curricular profile. Phase 1 of the project and of the explication attempt to articulate a theory of learning based on social constructivist principles which it is contended enable meaningful discourse to take place around the new shibboleth of 'lifelong learning'. New learning, it is held, can take place beyond the boundaries of the classroom and the

campus and some new domain assumptions are introduced concerning our understanding of how knowledge is produced; and

- **organisational change and development** – which has proceeded in parallel with the changes in curricular organisation and professional ideologies signalled above. This aspect of work analysed here has not been the exclusive focus of any single section of the explication, however, it has underpinned all of them. The changes and innovations dealt with throughout the project have called upon a range of competencies associated with leadership in organisational settings by the author (and the teams managed by the same), and include the following:

Communication skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to express oneself verbally and in writing • Listening skills
Managing information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retrieving, analysing, processing and combining information • Using information technology
Systems thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To learn and understand a whole, to see how things are related to each other and to understand the meaning of relations instead of things
Problem-focused thinking and problem solving skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be able to focus on the core problem
Putting new knowledge into practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeing the connection between theory and practice • Transferring knowledge “from the head to the hands”
Managing oneself and others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting realistic targets and communicating them to others • Recognising the gap between the current situation and the target and understanding how to fill the gap
Team work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing information • Collaboration • Achieving goals

2. Professional and personal objectives

It is hoped that the essentially collaborative character of the project described in the explication is apparent and that credit has been given where it is due to those who

contributed. Within this collective endeavour it is hoped that at both a personal and professional level of experience the following capacities were evidenced by the author:

- reflection on practice which led to transformations of thought and action for both self and others;
- authoritative involvement in the life of an institution was demonstrated;
- self-knowledge and self-evaluation was fostered and applied to improve professional and personal performance;
- ethical and social issues were considered and incorporated into the 'democratic' provision of educational services;
- recognition was given to the range of situations, systems, structures and relationships involved in the change process, analysed and exemplified in the curriculum-led innovation which was tested against practical, resource led constraints;
- analytical understanding was demonstrated through:
 - the creative transposition of meanings between different contexts, such as the creation of off-campus learning;
 - synthesis of disparate elements of social, ethnic and educational situations resulting in the offer of new participation opportunities for previously excluded categories of students;
 - contextualisation of learning and competencies which led to the adoption of a constructivist perspective for the dynamic curriculum;
 - recognition of paradoxes and contradictions, some of which cannot be easily transcended and which dictate certain pragmatic solutions, for example, in the generation of a strategic alliance involving national funding councils, the Privy Council, the Charity Commission and the governing bodies of both institutions in question;
 - evaluative skills applied particularly to the range of academic work contingent on the development of curriculum partnerships across higher and further education and designed to improve the professional practice of the staff involved;

- creativity and imagination, where an effort to develop and 'market' a vision of collaborative learning and work was made and where alternative choices and structures were offered to some of the straitjackets of past practice;
- questioning and reasoning was supported by the author in work with collaborative partners so that all those involved were continuously aware of changes and were able apply curiosity and assess information gained as its result;
- managing mental models and their application to demanding tasks and situations was demonstrated, particularly in relation to questions of how learning and knowledge becomes the property of some groups in society whilst serving to help create social exclusion for others;
- personal mastery and command of a knowledge base was extended so that the following could be demonstrated:
 - team leadership as a knowledgeable lead-professional;
 - strong personal vision;
 - clear and cogent understanding of the current reality;
 - understanding of the value of competence and skills as well as academic and subject-based knowledge;
 - ability to take responsibility for creating a change environment and aptitude for propelling and cajoling it into existence.

Ultimately it is for those involved and concerned to be the judges as to whether the overall project has succeeded in the terms set for it. It is hoped, however, that this explication demonstrates a collaborative development of professional practice which both meets the objectives set for it in the learning agreement, and simultaneously enhances both a personal and organisational capability, and indeed, takes both to a higher standard. It is hoped that the institutionally and socially structured context of the network of learning has been made clearer to those involved in it, and that knowledge and reflection in action has been demonstrated as part of the dialectic of shared learning which the project set out to identify and to progress.

If this has been achieved in some significant measure then the efforts expended will not have been in vain. The illumination of professionally based theory and practice does not end with the presentation of this explication; the project itself continues – but does so in the light of the experience captured as knowledge in use, in these pages.

David Davies

Word Count = 50,873 words, excluding references and appendices.

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X **Appendices:** ~~(bound separately to preserve confidentiality)~~

1. Westhill College of Higher Education: A Business Plan to re-establish long term viability. (Feb 1998) and Financial Prospects.
2. The Centre for Lifelong Learning (CLL).
3. The Strategic Alliance between Westhill College and the University of Birmingham.
4. Widening Participation: HEFCE bid and funding allocations - 1998/99

Appendix 1

**STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL
DISCUSSION DRAFT**

WESTHILL COLLEGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

A BUSINESS PLAN TO RE-ESTABLISH LONG-TERM VIABILITY

Westhill College of Higher Education
Birmingham
UK

February 1998

1. Executive Summary

Introduction

During the last 5 years, following the College's disassociation from Newman College under Funding Council guidance, considerable progress has been made in academic restructuring and in strengthening the finances. In 1996 the College was adjudged to have failed 1 subject in a disputed OFSTED inspection which resulted in the loss of student numbers. Despite making significant savings of £500k through further restructuring the College began to forecast deficits from 1998 onwards and agreed to share a consultancy review with the TTA (its lead accountant) to ascertain a common understanding on strategies which would lead to a viable future. Since commencing the study it has been necessary to accept a worsening situation as knowledge has come to hand that the application for INSET funds (TTA) and the allocation of extra students (HEFCE) will not be granted. Additionally, there was an adverse MASN adjustment.

This Plan accepts as its starting point that in a "do nothing" scenario, College cash reserves would run out in the year 2001 at which point investments (£1.4m) and substantial landholdings (last valuation for reinstatement £18.8m) would have to be used to achieve ongoing stability.

The Mission Statement in the Future

The College has reviewed its Mission Statement which it considers valid and tenable as well as broadly in line with current thinking about the development of the educational sector. The College's Mission Statement offers meaningful diversity and not just diversity for its own sake.

It has been suggested that the smallness of the College (say, 800 students) may threaten its long term viability and that it would be sensible to seek substantial long term alliances to secure a better future as well as growing by diversification into a market not affected by public funding.

The Opportunities to Secure the Future

The College is still financially strong and can support growth and attract alliance partners: a window of opportunity still exists for the College to retain strong initiative in these areas. The present portfolio of courses is recruiting well and its principal PGCE course is over-subscribed. There is a strong emphasis on Quality Assurance procedures and academic standards which are vested in the College's Academic Board by the terms of its Accreditation Agreement with the University of Birmingham. The quality of its existing portfolio is

considered a key requirement to underwrite the future development of new courses.

The potential regional and national markets for part time and fees only income generating courses is considerable and the University of Birmingham has approved accredited provision which is designed to allow the College to market courses that will appeal to such markets. The College's broad approach to these markets will be through a third School developed from the newly established Centre for Lifelong Learning (CLL) - which is closely vested in the College's wider mission to serve individuals and communities whose needs have not been fully met within conventional provision. There are considerable opportunities both at home and abroad which the College intends to exploit.

In its non-core business the College has also made significant progress in the Conference market and is developing contingency saving plans as well as allocating reserves which can all contribute to support the CLL in its market entry phase.

The Risks

The key risks that the College faces concern the understanding and adaptability of staff that have already had to cope with significant changes. The new CLL approach will require a commercialism which is new to the College and which will test both its academic and resources systems. There is a significant requirement for Governors and Managers to act with speed and conviction particularly with regard to alliances.

Within its chosen new market place, the College's CLL School will have to fight hard to secure recognition and develop the commercial tenacity required to secure accounts against competition. The breadth and flexibility of the product offer that may be required will be taxing.

The College has a strong conviction that it can handle such risks.

Future Projections

It is possible to demonstrate (see Page 53) that activity in the broad area covered by CLL, given positive support from the funding agencies, new conference business and savings can bring stability to the College. It is considered, however, that such break-even scenarios, even with their contingency plans, offer a vulnerable future. Therefore it remains a feature of this Plan to explore new alliances of substance and longevity so that in combination there will be a worthwhile future for those who have sought their career in Westhill and value its Mission. The Action Plans given at the end of the Plan set out the stepping stones that will make future viability possible.

2 STRATEGIC DIRECTION

2.1 *Mission Statement*

2.2 *The Criteria for Alliances*

2.3 *The Approach to Strategic Alliances and Timeframes*

2.4 *Relationships with the Federation*

2.5 *Reshaping the College (An Option)*

2. STRATEGIC DIRECTION

2.1 The Mission Statement and the College's Preferred Key Relationships

The College's Mission Statement as set out in the 1997/8 Strategic Plan is set out below:

Core Statement

Westhill College seeks to develop and maintain high quality teaching, learning and research within the university sector and to ensure that all managerial, financial and academic structures are economically efficient in the service of a collegiate community.

Supplementary Statement

From a Christian base, Westhill College has always aimed to provide trained professional leadership for work with children and young people, without prejudice, in both the voluntary and state sectors, and to encourage research commensurate with that aim in all areas of its curriculum. It is now in the process of diversifying both its teaching and its research into a limited number of substantive disciplines within the spheres of arts, humanities, religious studies and educational theory and practice.

As a unique foundation born out of a cluster of Christian denominations and societies, which together constitute the mainstream of the free Church tradition, the College holds to the main values of that tradition: an uncompromising search for truth; a concern for social and political justice; a high sensitivity towards the disadvantaged and the cultivation of a sense of personal responsibility.

The College actively seeks to collaborate with others, both in the cause of efficiency and in keeping with its long standing commitments to the Ecumenical Movement and, more recently, to multi-faith participation. The College is proud of its Christian foundation, but does not impose any sort of religious test. Its recruitment policy encourages applicants from all religious, ethnic, political and social background and from those who have suffered physical, social, educational or material disadvantage, as well as from those who, like its founders, belong to minority groups.

In the following pages of the 1997/8 Strategic Plan this statement has been set within the context of a broad pattern of Strategic Alliances.

This Business Plan with its emphasis on work-based and lifelong learning gives new energy and wider meaning to the Mission Statement

and examines and extends the College's pattern of alliances. There is, therefore, compatibility and cohesion between the past, the present and the future which makes the proposals that follow easier to assimilate than might otherwise have been anticipated.

It is clear that there is a distinctiveness to the Mission Statement that makes it imperative that the College states its preferences at this juncture:

- The College wishes to retain its distinctive image..
- The College strongly prefers to retain a close association with the University of Birmingham, an institution with which it has long established links.
- The College strongly prefers to retain its close working association with the Selly Oak Colleges federation of which it is a founder member and with whom it shares a campus.

The College faces a serious financial crisis which requires realism in reassessing preferred relationships, the courage to make radical changes and the setting aside of contingency plans to allow progress against an uncertain future.

In broad outline the College has suffered a cutback in the allocation of student numbers from both TTA (its accounting authority) and subsequently HEFCE as a result of a disputed OFSTED inspection and the past profile of College achievements. The cutbacks have been of unparalleled severity within the sector but were within the rules being applied at the time. Applications for additional funds or students have either not been successful, or the result is not yet known. This means that even after successfully implementing a £500k a year saving plan the College still faces a projected accumulated deficit of £1.7m over the next 4 years if it takes no further action. It is therefore imperative to assess new strategies to achieve at least a break-even situation and to avert a cashflow problem which could occur within 2 years, assuming that neither investments (£1.4m) or land (£18.8m) are liquidated.

Financing Independence

The College still awaits the outcome of applications for additional students which could affect future strategy. With regard to teacher training (in which the College has every intention of maintaining its PGCE course with particular emphasis on Primary Education together with PGCE RE and a program of CPU) the College notes that the emphasis on market economics and quality determination make increased participation an unacceptable high risk strategy. It therefore places an emphasis on growth and diversification in a non-public funded market and is considerably encouraged by the opportunities that are open to it in the work based and lifelong learning market at home and overseas.

2.2 The Criteria for Alliances

Realistically, the College has to accept that generating the finance to underwrite its independence will be an onerous task that can be made easier if existing alliances are enhanced and contingency plans made to forge new partnerships as and where necessary.

The Key Characteristics Required of Present and New Alliances

A. Fundamental Characteristics

Core Statement

i. Quality

The quality of teaching, learning and research is at the heart of the statement. Therefore, any proposed partner must enhance this aspect of the College's work and give endorsement in both the established and proposed new market places.

ii. Business-like Efficiency

The College has established a strong record of achievement in this area over the last 5 years and records excellent financial strength ratios under HEFCE criteria. Partnerships should enhance this and stimulate further improvements.

Supplementary Statement

The key elements are:

- i. Lack of prejudice.
- ii. The uncompromising search for the truth.
- iii. Social and political justice.
- iv. Sensitivity towards the disadvantaged.
- v. Ecumenical.
- vi. Consistent with the Free Church tradition, including the right to dissent.
- vii. Encouragement of personal responsibility.
- viii. Development of community values.

There is an underlying similarity within the 8 principles set out above which allows them to be drawn together in 2 fundamental concepts of co-operative management viz:

- that in a partnership the Parties have to recognise that:
- if one side is constantly overruled, co-operation ceases, and
- effective partnerships have to be self-determining (free to be effective in their chosen market places) although they will not be self-supporting.

In summary, the style of partnership that is consistent with the College's Mission Statement and which would support the growth and diversification programme would contribute new dimensions of academic quality to support the College in the market place and encourage more efficient operations.

B. Practical Considerations

An effective alliance would need to give practical assistance in the following ways if the College were to diversify quickly and effectively into work based/lifelong learning:

i. Accreditation

The provision of a flexible licence to operate in and respond to the needs of the College's chosen market place at home and overseas.

ii. Products

Assistance in the provision of quality products to complement the College's limited range of activity for the work based and lifelong learning market.

iii. Market Endorsement

A clear and unequivocal statement that the 2 parties were working together.

iv. Fee Revenue

Short term assistance (as a minimum) to improve fee values in the next 2 years.

C. Speed of Response

Within any chosen alliance the College must place a premium on securing effective penetration in its chosen market place within the next 2 years. It is considered that if such an alliance can be achieved quickly there will be a higher mutuality in the arrangement and a shared responsibility towards success. Any alliances developed at a later date would almost certainly find a weakened college and therefore have to concentrate on the elimination of losses and survival which will weaken opportunities to develop chosen markets.

2.3 The Approach to Specific Alliances and Time Frames.

A. The HE Sector

1. The University of Birmingham (the preferred choice)

The College has already started on a process of revising the relationship and achieved significant breakthroughs in the range of activity that may be carried out under the Accreditation Agreement. Preliminary discussions are already underway with regard to new models of relationships and the College intends that this analysis should be completed as soon as practical. Legal advisers have been alerted and initial consideration is being given to the impact of closer alliances on the Trust Deed as well as assessing possible charity law implications.

2. The University of Central England and Oxford Brookes University

The College will set up a briefing document outlining its requirements for a strong working alliance with both Universities who have already shown an interest in working with Westhill. Concurrently the College will seek to negotiate a formal offer of alliance. It is the College's intention to terminate negotiations if a strong alliance with the University of Birmingham is achieved. In appropriate circumstances the College would propose a dual alliance.

3. Other Options

By April 1998 the College will have drawn up a shortlist of 3 alternative alliance institutions who may be approached if negotiations in 1 and 2 above falter.

4. Fallback Position

It is the College's intention to have established its longer term alliances by January 1999 at the latest.

2.4 The Federation of Selly Oak Colleges

The College derives benefits from and offers benefits to the federation of Selly Oak Colleges. The overall relationship between all the affiliate members is largely based on custom and practice and there is equality in relationships irrespective of size or need. For specific projects such as the LRC, the joint telephone exchange or the IT system, legally binding agreements are entered into. The Orchard Learning Resources Centre (OLRC) reflects a working relationship where the federation contributes land and capital and Westhill contributes the base load of student fee income to handle revenue requirements.

Reassessment of Federal Working Relationships

Within the key characteristics of the partnership which the College has determined the federation fits more closely to all the requirements of the supplementary statement, but adds nothing in terms of either fundamental characteristics, practical considerations or speed of response.

The College believes that it can strengthen its federal relationships by clearly determining the contribution that each side can make and electing to develop these strengths together. In this way, no issues of sovereignty or issues of conflicting loyalty need arise and federal development issues, which continue to remain of immense importance to the College, will become more sharply pointed. This assessment acknowledges that recent attempts to merge parts of the federation into Westhill have failed and cannot be reactivated. The timing of this revision is not crucial but it is important that a negotiating period is limited and does not become a diversion for management. Further information on the Selly Oak Colleges' relationship in practical application is given in the Estates section.

2.5 Reshaping the College - What the College can do for Itself

Shaping the College to be effective for the immediate future is difficult because of a wide range of uncertainties. Specifically the question of future student numbers is not yet resolved, with significant applications to HEFCE as yet unanswered.

During the critical financial period over the next 24 months, the College may have to accept that its student intake will fall as low as 143 places. Previous and future years' intakes are at 297 and 317 students respectively. It is clear to all that the higher educational system generally, with the pattern of costs that prevail throughout, is not designed to cope with such year on year fluctuations which puts strains particularly upon a small college and crucially so upon its residential services.

The College therefore has developed a contingency plan which it may reluctantly have to carry out if it wishes to retain staff and some semblance of academic order through a period of low intake.

A Further Restructuring of the College (An Option)

Presently the College is based on 2 Schools: the School of Professional Studies and the School of Arts & Humanities; each managed by a Dean. The Centre of Lifelong Learning is currently proposed as a third School to be opened, albeit embryonically, in September 1998. The option the College may have to consider is the merging of the 2 original Schools and the diversion of staff into the new CLL School. Exercising such an option would clearly be a highly defensive measure and would require an exceptional level of understanding and support from staff.

The effectiveness of exercising this option would also clearly depend upon identifying a small team of existing members of staff who could orientate themselves to new work aligned to work-based provision.

In such a move the maintenance of quality would have to be a matter of high level management concern and it would be necessary to appoint a senior quality adviser who would oversee quality throughout the College's whole range of activity on a day by day basis.

This option would not reduce staff costs although the Combined School of existing activities as a consolidated unit might be susceptible to some improved efficiencies. The main attraction of the scheme lies in the energising of the new School and the advantage of placing growth in the hands of employees who know the College and can network effectively within as new Programmes have to be drawn together.

Summary

The College's strategic direction is therefore clear in so far as it is concentrating on adapting its preferred alliances and seeks resolution for this phase of its activity within the next 3 months.

There are uncertainties that have to be coped with but nevertheless the idea of the College retaining its distinctive image can be retained. There are restructuring opportunities within the College's own capabilities that might speed up the development programme. In such circumstances, the staff base could be preserved but the change in direction would require substantial support and understanding. Such an option would be exercised within 6 months.

Overall, plans are in hand to achieve an alternative model of alliance that satisfies the Mission Statement within the next 12 months.

3 ACADEMIC AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 *Description of the current portfolio*

3.2 *Details on the accreditation policy with Birmingham University*

3.3 *Description of the College's evaluation and management of quality*

3.4 *Description of how the portfolio has, and continues to be developed*

3.5 *Description of research*

3.6 *Description of recruitment strategies, markets and entry standard.*

3. ACADEMIC AIMS & OBJECTIVES

3.1 The Current Portfolio

The College's academic programmes are accredited by the University of Birmingham and are delivered through two Schools and a Centre for Lifelong Learning.

School of Professional Studies

Undergraduate Programmes:

BPhil Community and Youth Studies

DipHE Community and Youth Studies

Postgraduate and Professional Programmes:

PGCE Primary

PGCE Secondary Religious Education

BPhil Primary Education

BPhil and Diploma Community and Youth Studies

BPhil and Diploma Counselling

MEd Primary

MA Applied Community Studies

MPhil

PhD

Modular Masters Degree

Centre for Church Education and Development
RE Centre

School of Arts and Humanities

Undergraduate programmes:

BA (Hons) Humanities

- Childhood Studies
 - Creative Arts
 - English Literature, English Language and Art
 - History: Islam and the Christian West
 - Mathematics, Science and Psychology
 - 19th and 20th Century Studies
 - Race and Ethnic Studies
 - Sports, Physical Education and Community Studies
 - Visual Arts
- BA (Hons) Applied Theological Studies
- Islamic
 - Christian
 - Mission Theology

Postgraduate Programmes:

MA and Diploma Islamic Studies

MA and Diploma Mission Studies

MTheol Applied Theological Studies

MPhil

Modular Masters Degrees

PhD

Centre for Lifelong Learning

The College has established a third arena for the development of its academic profile. The Centre for Lifelong Learning (CLL) is committed to devising and delivering teaching programmes and learning opportunities focused on students' achievements.

The key objectives for the CLL are:

- offer an appropriate range of qualifications for a lifetime of learning
- connect education to performance
- facilitate 'Open Learning'
- identify learning communities
- deliver education and training with the most innovative and effective methods available
- ensure excellence in all programmes at all levels.

CLL Programmes

Learning for Life - a part-time Certificate, Diploma and Degree Programme based on a Combined Studies modular framework to be launched in 1998-99.

Work-based Learning (WBL) - accredited and approved study programmes for individuals and groups based on the workplace as a learning organisation.

Overseas and Distance Learning - a programme of accredited awards delivered in Israel and Africa in 1998-99 and extended thereafter.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) - a programme which builds upon the College's traditional role as a deliverer of teacher INSET and Religious Education (RE). CPD opportunities will be extended to a wide range of professional groups.

FE and Community Liaison (FE/CL) - collaborative and compact arrangements are to be developed and extended with further education and community learning centres across Birmingham and the West Midlands, based upon access to the Westhill accredited programmes and resources.

3.2 Accreditation with the University of Birmingham

Westhill's policy for academic development envisages a close and continuing relationship with the University of Birmingham. All the accredited higher education awards of the College lead to University of Birmingham qualifications. Since September 1997 the College has implemented a fully modular awards structure which includes taught first degrees and higher degrees. In addition, in 1998 the University accepted the College's APEL scheme allowing progression and growth possibilities for credit accumulation and transfer.

The College's framework for awards and qualifications is also the mechanism whereby the University accredits diplomas, undergraduate and taught masters degrees within the Selly Oak Federation utilising the agreed regulations of the University and its audit procedures.

A new accreditation agreement between the College, SOC and the University will be negotiated in 1998-99.

3.3 Description of the College's Evaluation and Management of Quality

The supervision, maintenance and development of quality assurance procedures and academic standards in the College are invested in the Academic Board of the College by the terms of the Accreditation Agreement with the University of Birmingham. They are monitored through the process of Academic Audit carried out annually as part of the University monitoring system.

Each programme carries out an annual programme review. This is audited by the Academic Audit Committee, (AAC), which may require additional information and materials and which may interview staff and students. The AAC then produces an Annual General Review Report. In addition, every five years a programme undergoes an In-Depth Review. The procedures for this are now being deployed to prepare for a QAA Subject Review. Both Annual General Review Reports and In-Depth Review Reports are received by the College Academic Board and forwarded to the Accreditation Committee for scrutiny and report. The College has recently committed itself to institutional review the outcome of which was a highly complementary report.

3.4 Development of the Portfolio

The Westhill portfolio of teaching programmes and learning activity is rooted in its mission to serve individuals and communities whose needs have not been fully met within conventional provision. The following issues of context are important features of its development programme:

- the College's mission is addressed within a curriculum framework which is committed to growth
- applicability to future work opportunities for students is viewed as a key to the curriculum offer
- progression possibilities: where students start is not important - destinations are
- a strategy for development has been adopted, e.g. lifelong learning which widens access and deepens credit
- transformative knowledge and experience which can be demonstrated and measured is to be fostered
- part-time provision; flexibility; partnership; and open learning are made available to learners
- learning support and guidance is recognised as a vital element of provision
- innovative assessment - which is both critical and student friendly - is needed at all levels
- personal and professional development (PPD) will be encouraged
- opportunities to gain qualifications at all levels are offered
- recognition of learning diversity and achievement will be the College's hallmark
- collaboration and shared learning with "learning communities" and "learning organisations" is a key strategic objective.

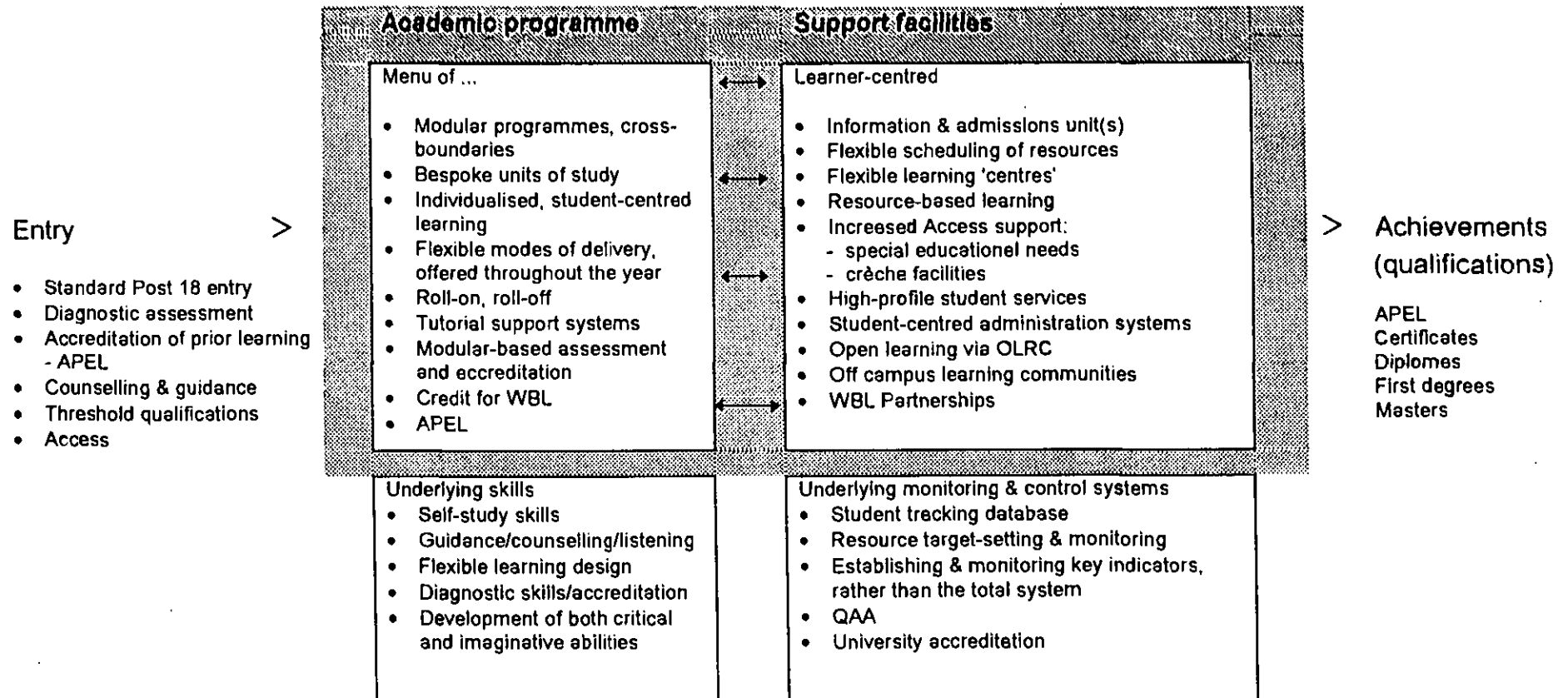
The College's portfolio of courses and programmes continues to develop through:

- the adoption of new programmes of study, e.g., modular degrees and awards
- more flexible accreditation procedures and the use of APEL
- use of diverse delivery methods, e.g., open learning, distance tuition, computer-assisted learning (internet delivery) and work-based learning.

Most importantly, development is facilitated through the strategy for academic growth which focuses on lifelong learning and the notion of **"Tomorrow's College"** which is rooted in the College's commitment to student and achievement centred learning and qualifications. The diagram which follows illustrates key features of the strategy.

WESTHILL COLLEGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Tomorrow's College ...
the providers of achievement-based qualifications



3.5 Description of Research

The School of Arts and Humanities and School of Professional Studies offer opportunities for students wishing to take higher degrees by research leading to the award of MPhil and PhD. Each school has research clusters identifying particular research interests.

School of Arts and Humanities

The School's **History** research cluster has particular interest in:

- working class communities, childhood and welfare third world, postcolonial history, including the myths of empire and its legacy, orientalism, etc.
- social histories of religion
- the historical roots of contemporary cultural issues.

The **World Religions** research cluster has identified a number of research areas which it is seeking to develop:

- hermeneutic and analytical studies within the Christian or Islamic faith traditions
- a cross-discipline analysis of fundamentalism as a religious, cultural and political category
- comparative analysis of international models of inter-faith dialogue
- conceptual and action research towards an applied theology
- conflict and resolution studies in settings where affiliations to distinctive faith communities is one of the factors in the conflict.

The **Art and Design** research cluster is conducting research into art practice in the culture industries and artist-in-residence schemes in schools, prisons, etc.

School of Professional Studies

The School's **Community Studies** research cluster is interested in the following areas:

- normative or action-based studies of community provision, e.g. in health, counselling, youth work, etc.
- the roles of church, youth, community activist and other groups operating in multi-ethnic settings
- studies in interprofessional collaboration.

The School's **Curriculum and Evaluation** research cluster has research interests in:

- national curriculum implementation studies, particularly with respect to Key Stage 1 literacy and numeracy
- curriculum development and/or action research within the setting of the researcher's own school
- policy critique of the national curriculum
- evaluation of curricular innovation using qualitative methodologies
- effectiveness studies of teacher education provision

The **Language and Ethnicity** research cluster has identified two primary areas of interest:

- studies in the linguistic cultures of the inner city and their impact on schooling
- bilingualism in the primary school.

Learning City is a joint activity with the University of Birmingham's School of Education. It has an overall concern for active citizenship and the place of education in the making of the city.

The **Learning City** research cluster is concerned with monitoring Birmingham's impact as part of the international "Learning City" movement. Its two principal areas of interest are:

- school improvement, particularly by utilising and extending the existing teachers' action research network
- community education, especially with respect to the inter-professional approaches in inner city settings.

There are also research opportunities for students with interests in Health Education and/or Christians in Public Life.

The **Religious Education (Christian, Muslim and Interfaith)** research cluster has a wide spread of concerns, but with two areas perhaps centrally placed:

- RE policy and spirituality in the curriculum
- faith and cross-faith in religious education.

The **Work, Community and Identity** research cluster is concerned with work processes in schooling, and extends into post-structuralism and postmodernity through studies of work, race, sexuality and identity.

Westhill aspires to enhance its reputation for practically-relevant, values-driven analysis and action research around questions of social policy and social justice.

3.6 Recruitment, Markets and Entry Standards

Recruitment for the College's existing full-time programmes within the humanities and teacher education fields is healthy and for the latter, heavily over-subscribed. The most significant 'driver' for the recruitment position of the College is that of the funding agencies, which currently limits the operational scope within the MASN allocations. These allow only very limited scope for expansion within the curriculum offered to students. In the field of teacher education no expansion can be envisaged given current national policies. Future expansion of full-time courses is dependent upon the allocation of funded student numbers by either or both the TTA and HEFCE.

The potential regional and national markets for part-time and fees only, income-generating provision is considerable and the University has approved accredited provision which is designed to appeal to such markets. The Centre for Lifelong Learning (CLL) has been established at the College, with a full-time team of three in the first instance, to exploit these opportunities. With regard to part-time adult learners, the CLL will develop a limited programme of campus and community-based courses in 1998-99. The size and scope of this programme of continuing education (called "Learning for Life") will depend upon whether the HEFCE approves a pump-priming proposal under its widening access scheme. (The Centre for Lifelong Learning is described in Section 4).

Entry standards for the full-time courses will continue to be within the parameters adopted by UCAS institutions. The College has formed a collaborative link with UCAS and its Director of Statistics, Research and Support Services is a Fellow of the College. Within the realm of part-time and off-campus learning the College has adopted an institution-wide APEL procedure and structure which will focus on:

- facilitation, not didacticism
- knowledge construction, rather than knowledge transfer
- knowledge use and reflection rather than repetition
- active rather than passive or inert knowledge
- competencies which are learned both in the classroom and beyond it
- continuous learning which requires progressive autonomy
- learning organisations and communities as well as individuals.

4 THE CENTRE FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

The following section is a self-contained Business Plan set out here to show the detailed approach to key activities. The Plan is also designed to be used with College teams independently of the full Business Plan.

THE CENTRE FOR LIFELONG LEARNING (CLL)

**A Business Plan prepared for inclusion in an overall Viability Study for
Westhill College of Higher Education whereby the College repositions itself to
diversify into offering work-based education in the commercial
and non public-funded areas**

February 1998

The Centre for Lifelong Learning

Executive Summary

Overall, Westhill is encouraged by the general market conditions that offer a favourable background to the introduction of its proposed new School - a Centre for Lifelong Learning (CLL). Policy moves within the Government in general and the educational sector in particular appear broadly supportive.

The weakness that the College has to overcome largely concerns its lack of experience in working commercially and generating income from sales within a regular pattern of activity. While the College is entering the market at an early stage, it is nevertheless a "small player" with no track record in this area. The pace of growth that is required to balance the College's financial profile will be hard to achieve. Realistic plans have been drawn up but even these will require considerable effort and dedication.

Nevertheless, substantial advantages will arise from balancing College activity in non-Government funded areas and aligning to a series of commercial and industrial activities with alternative lifecycles.

Within the proposed marketing mix it is intended to offer an easy-to-understand pricing system based on £/credit which would make purchasing decisions easier. The product range needs to be wide and flexible and responsive to the competitive needs of others. Such activity will only be achieved with a pro-active accreditation partner. Early ideas are being formulated for promotion and it is thought through networking with other professionals that better sales/conversion ratios can be achieved.

Within the model budget which is being drawn up, the College believes that by positioning itself with care both geographically and by industrial sector that it can establish a set of regional and national accounts that will underpin a stable business developed over the next 5 years. The state of the market is such that it is considered appropriate to divide the project into 2 stages: a 2 year pilot phase and then 3 years of soundly researched market activity.

Finding the people, who combine both academic and marketing expertise will not be easy: the College is encouraged to feel that it may find through internal search some colleagues who will be capable of adapting.

Introduction

Westhill College of Higher Education (WH) has been subject to severe cutbacks in student numbers which have lead to projections of financial deficit from 1999 onwards.

Westhill is currently responsible to the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) which acts as lead accountant. The College's emphasis on teacher training, which occasioned its transfer from HEFCE to the TTA, no longer exists and it is therefore anticipated that WH will be transferred back to HEFCE in the near future.

While this revision is considered helpful by allowing the responsible authority to oversee the majority workload, the College nevertheless makes it clear that it has no intention of withdrawing from teacher training.

Nevertheless a strategic appraisal of public funding support in the future has made it clear to WH that it would be wise to diversify the source of its fee income and achieve a significant balance of its revenue from other than Funding Council sources.

This decision is a pragmatic one based on economic criteria but in no way suggests or implies that WH wishes to weaken its relationship with the funding authorities whose long term support and guidance in many areas is crucial to the College's overall credibility, not least in the development of its proposed new markets.

The Plan that follows is the College's initial proposal to develop activity. Therefore the first 2 years' of the Plan may be considered as having pilot phase status while Phase 2 (3 years) will need to be carefully reviewed as more robust information comes forward.

Situation Analysis

This opening section of the Plan sets out the strengths and weaknesses, threats and opportunities that condition the College's approach to its Centre for Lifelong Learning. A strength of opportunity and an appropriateness of timing for such an operation support optimism, albeit tempered by the acknowledgement of the difficulties set out. Nevertheless, overall the appraisal offers an encouraging basis on which the College can found a new School of meaningful activity which is consistent with its overall Mission.

Strengths

The perceived strengths are:

1. The proposed activity is positively encouraged by Westhill's Mission Statement.
2. The Government offers overall support to the proposed activity.
3. There is a demonstrable need for the proposed activity and external motivations to encourage the proposed development.
4. Following restructuring, the College can now benefit from the enthusiasm and flexibility of younger staff.
5. There are some existing departmental activities within the College that can be aligned to CLL and give support and impetus to the proposed Development Plan eg Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and the RE Centre.

Weaknesses

The perceived weaknesses are:

1. The College has no experience of commercial development.
2. Lack of market presence in the proposed activity area.
3. The College has not yet developed proactive support for this activity with its accreditation body.
4. Although the College has strong financial reserves, its present operational base has been weakened.
5. Lack of commercial development experience may lead to unreasonable expectations as to the speed with which growth and diversification can be achieved.
6. No immediately accessible public funds are available.

Opportunities

The perceived opportunities are:

1. Significant policy development which generates favourable market conditions to work in.
2. A destabilising of the traditional labour market and the growth of "careership" based on an individual's self-sufficiency.
3. The growth in an "acquisition of qualification" market (sometimes paraphrased as the improvement of personal opportunity market).
4. The "University of Industry" and corporate learning movement are developing quickly on both a national and international basis.
5. There is a growing awareness of the value of networking (including education/industry links) and a merging of interests and styles of profit and non-profit organisations.
6. A Government commitment to grow education and widen access. (Note: the restructuring of HEFCE regional organisation.)

Threats

The perceived threats are:

1. The long time span required for development of the project in a competitive market place and particularly so when the competition may not be direct but indirect, and therefore more difficult to handle, requiring the reallocation of management and staff time within another organisation.
2. Present lack of understanding (and therefore no proactive support) of accreditation agencies that may not understand the new market place that Westhill wishes to participate in.
3. Already established competition from newer active universities such as Surrey, Oxford Brooks and Wolverhampton.

Key Sensitivity Factors

The key determining factors that affect the pace and quality of growth in the market place are:

- The development of a staff team with commercial acumen and sales ability which can also gain acceptance within the College.
- We need to offer a flexible customised programme of education to a customer base that is seeking competitive advantage for itself. This suggests a responsiveness to a provision of product offers that is unusual for the College.

- The ability to attract and retain a broad spectrum of network partners to speed up and sustain growth and diversification.

Assumptions

The assumptions for Stage 1 of the Plan (Years 1 and 2) are:

1. That the Funding Council(s) allocates resources to the College to develop and deliver "lifelong learning" opportunities.
2. A proactive and responsive accrediting body.
3. That industry, commerce and public services all budget significant training appropriations.
4. A supportive environment within the College and the Federation.
5. That a cost effective price tariff and course portfolio can be established.

Additionally

The assumptions for the further growth in Years 3, 4 and 5 are:

1. Strategic commitment by Government and Funding Agencies to sustainable growth in lifelong learning.
2. An adequate unit of resource allocated for such work.
3. Continuity of a supportive College environment and ethos.
4. Adequate staffing resources for new areas of work.

Main Objectives

The main objectives of the CLL Project are:

- To draw together under the Centre for Lifelong Learning one effective marketing unit (a school) including the College's work-based learning (WBL), Continuous Professional Development (CPD), Religious Education, External and Distance Learning activities (RE), continuing individual/part-time studies (CIPTS) and associated overseas variants of this combined programme.

and,

- To ensure the long term viability of the College by balancing the risks of income generation across markets with different financial support and life cycles.

The Core Strategy of the CLL School is:

The development of a raft of non-directly funded programmes to energise the College, to give new meaning to its Mission Statement and to secure recognition that Westhill College is an effective participant and partner in the work-based learning sector.

To devise and develop learning programmes and accredited learning for a variety of learning organisations and learning communities which it is the purpose of the College to serve.

The Development of a Marketing Mix to Deliver the Objectives of the CLL School

The following activities are set out in the form of a traditional marketing plan where an examination of pricing, promotion, product, people and delivery considerations combine to outline the scope of activity that will be undertaken. The activity is later consolidated into an Action Plan (see Section 8) for monitoring purposes and a Budget set out on Page 36

Pricing and Target Setting

The pricing of educational products in the work-based learning place had not yet reached a formalised stage and there is a wide range of activity which makes price comparisons difficult, and therefore the setting of price tariffs problematical.

It therefore follows that at the early stage of the work based learning lifecycle where publicly funded educational institutions are the new entrants selling qualifications, that CLL will have to invest time and effort in researching the price strategies of others. It is to be anticipated that other universities are not yet sophisticated in their pricing strategies and that wide fluctuations in price will be found.

Such market conditions offer immediate negotiating opportunities but research in this area is considered essential to underpin a long term market position based on competitive pricing.

CLL has therefore decided to base its activity on a £/credit system. In such a system £/credits will have different values in each sector of the market. For example, in part-time learning (CIPTS) the £/credit value is generally stable within a range of £6.5/credit to £6/credit being based on a £60/65 per course fee with 10 credits).

Work-based learning programmes researched thus far suggest an upper range of say £10/credit. Westhill is assuming a lower figure of £8/credit and projecting that 60% of income will fall to the bottom line.

Extrapolation would suggest that the surplus available per course per year (say, 30 participants) would range between £6,500 and £10,800. An employer fully funding such a learning programme might expect to pay, say, £900 per student per annum.

The budget given in Appendix I and the targets given in the Action Plan (Appendix II) reflect this approach to pricing.

As the price of work-based courses remains at an early stage, Westhill believes that if it seeks to establish a market position based on a credible and understandable price policy this will enable purchasers to make quick comparisons on a value for money basis. This will aid decision taking.

The Product Range

Westhill's proposed product range is shown in matrix form to highlight where existing products fall in existing or new markets and where new products fall into new or existing markets. In this way broad judgements may be made with regard to risk and the intensity of effort required for development.

New Market	Liberal Arts Part-time (Combined Hons) Liaison with FE Accredited Corporate Learning	Flexible Programmes based around Business Studies and Information Computing & Communications (ICT)
Existing Markets	Liberal Arts Teacher Training Community & Youth Counselling CPD Part-time Overseas (first target markets)	Flexible Programmes based around Business Studies and Information Computing and Communications Counselling (advances) Part-time Variants of CPD Local Community Course
	Existing Products	New Products

It is considered that all variants are adaptable to overseas markets but that there is a fundamental need to identify partners/alliances to assist in the development of both new products and new markets.

Promotion

It is clear that the "acquisition of qualifications/improvement of personal opportunity market" in work-based learning requires activity at 2 levels:

- The specifying level where the company approves and funds or part-funds training for the future good of the institution.

and

- The consumer level where the individual agrees to participate free or part-funded, knowingly appraised by the present employer, but seeking leverage with future (unknown) employers.

It follows that the specification of benefits and promotional tools will need to operate at both levels. Examples of other sectors that work in the dual customer mode and which need approval at 2 levels are, for example, contract caterers and pension scheme providers.

Working at the specifier level requires a consultancy-style approach with networking strengths supported by in-depth case and proof of quality performance. Westhill believes that it can widen its initial approach through alliances with other professions. An example of this is the consultancy profession. Consultants often handle one-off assignments with high marketing costs but lack the ability to implement their recommendations through long-term training because their costs are too high. If follow-through

training were based on a jointly proposed educational programme at, say supervisor level improvements in sustaining recommendations could be made which would be mutually beneficial to all participants.

At the consumer level, Westhill has a long tradition of student support that can be adapted to promote the benefits that can be derived from the academic learning process (as opposed to commercial testing). Additionally, the concept of student charter and the tutorial approach can be adapted to the work place. The fear of failing a course provided by an employer is considerable and offers considerable scope to the educational provider to give comfort benefits without weakening quality concepts.

Other professional bodies which will be canvassed for growth alliances will be TECs, the RDA and the Chamber of Commerce.

The present proposal for the CLL School is given in Appendix Series A.

The People who will Deliver the CLL/Work-Based Learning Programme for the College

It is proposed to develop a core team of practitioners under the leadership of the Deputy Principal. The core team will comprise a Director, a Programme Leader and a Secretary. The advertisements and job descriptions for these roles are given in Appendix A.

The College has set aside £135,000 seed corn money to cover the start-up costs.

Stage I

Following appointment, the core team will verify the Action Plan and targets, develop promotional tools and set up the customer database, MIS systems and performance monitoring schedules.

Stage II

This stage concerns the co-ordination and incorporation of existing College strengths by way of alignment and development of existing programmes. At this stage the Continuing Professional Development section, the RE department and the overseas team (presently 1 person concerning Israel) will align their work to that of CLL.

Stage III - Internal Promotion

As part of the process of "energising the College" it is proposed that a portion of the Staff Development Fund be re-orientated towards a Programme Development Fund. Staff, either individually or in teams, can pitch for financial support to develop diversification or market growth projects.

Stages I-III above are all to be accomplished well within the initial 2-year pilot study period: at the 18 month stage a reappraisal of School staff strengths and needs will be carried out and, in the light of market experience, a revised team established to undertake Stage II (Years 3-5) programme.

Delivery of the Programme and Distribution of Activity

The Market Place

The work-based learning market is clearly wide, has enormous potential and, within the setting of a well-development market such as the UK, for all practical purposes appears to have unlimited potential. Such market places are, however, deceptive and have usefully been referred to as "ghost markets" - ie they remain a figment of the imagination unless precision and control is used in their exploitation.

Westhill therefore describes the market as workplaces that either singly or in combination offer training opportunities. For control purposes, segmentation is proposed on a geographic basis. This can both aid cost effectiveness and give a closer alignment to the College Mission Statement. Further segmentation on an industrial sector basis assists in containing the costs that will arise from the inherent flexibility required in the provision of customised programmes.

Geographic Segmentation

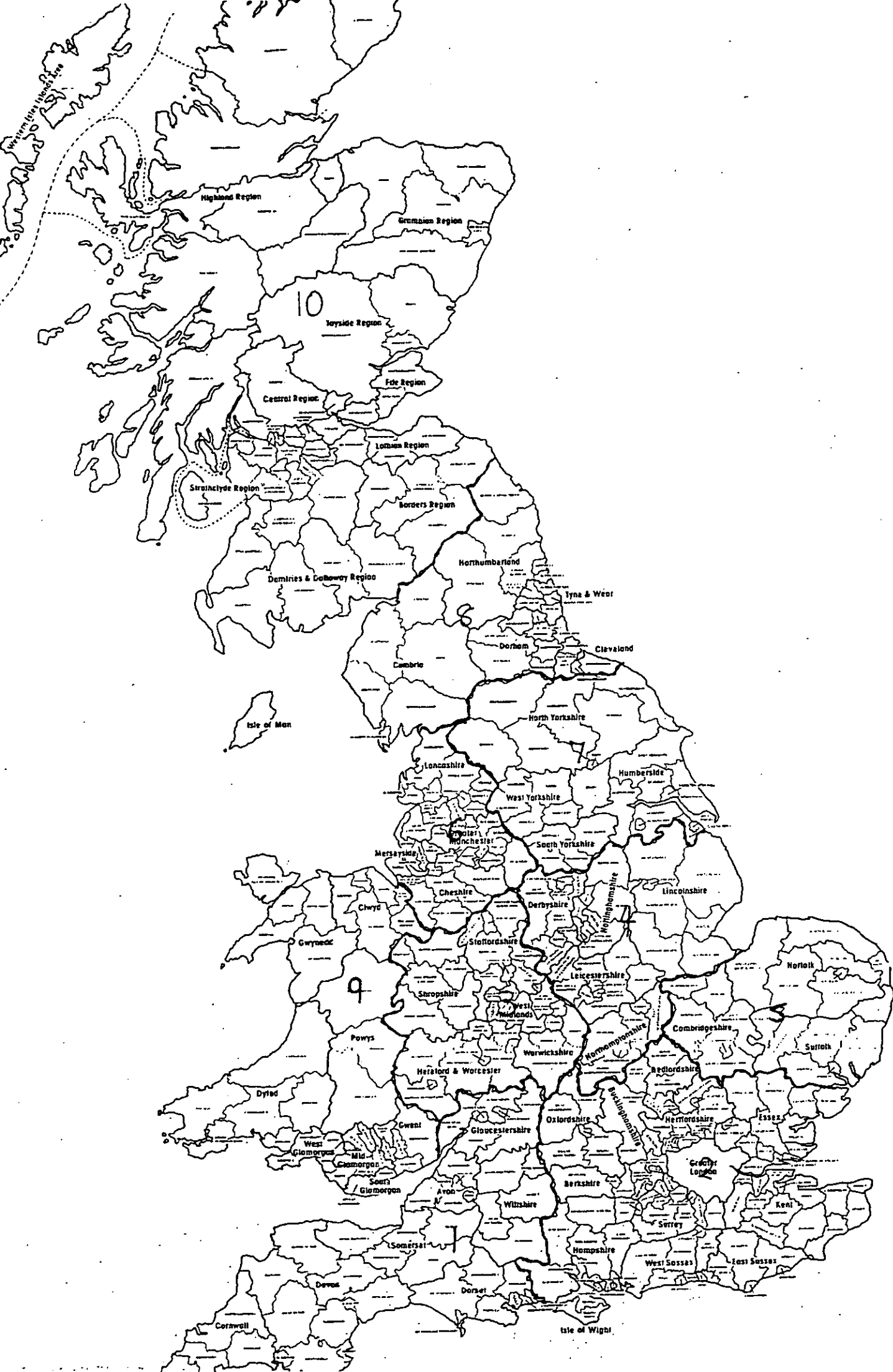
Westhill proposes to define its target areas in the UK by economic regions, but accepts the anomaly that Head Offices and decision-takers may reside in any region.

Concentrating activity, as far as practical, in the East and West Midlands will be considered the pilot phase area's main target. Thereafter, when it is felt appropriate to do so extension will be made into the Manchester area and then Yorkshire, Humberside and Tyneside regions.

The areas outlined, and shown on the attached map, contain industrial areas considered to be similar to the Birmingham conurbation and therefore susceptible to claims that Westhill can bring specialist understanding to their work-based learning programmes.

The original limitation of the project to the East and West Midlands is a pragmatic response to ensuring that the logistics of a small team's initial workload emphasises the time made available for negotiation, decision and follow-up, and minimise the cost and time of travel wherever possible. No problems are foreseen in detailing the database and most likely decision-takers and seeking to establish high call rates to optimise the quotation to sale conversion ratios.

The proposed targets and budgets based on credits delivered and programmes marketed are set out in Tables 1 and 2 overleaf. The approach is pessimistic in assuming that no work-based learning sales are invoiced in the first 12 months and that only limited ingress is made in Year 2. It is suggested that the provision of materials and the consolidation of partnerships are key limiting factors to the speed of progress. The input from other areas which it has been proposed should be aligned to the work-based learning division are also shown in the Table overleaf.



Progress in Stage II (Years 3-5 inclusive) can be no more than a projection at this stage since the validity of any forecast will need to be aligned to the evidence drawn on in the initial 2-year pilot study.

Sector Segmentation

The aim of sector segmentation in the pilot study stage is to ensure the development of knowledge and market penetration in different sectors as a protection against national economic fluctuations. Such segmentation also opens the way to identify more precise strategies for growth in the most rewarding areas. The sectors chosen for a balanced approach are:

- heavy industrial
- light industrial
- service
- commercial
- and public-funded (eg schools and police)

TABLE 1

CLL: Summary of Growth (£000s)

Core Business Activity	1997/8	1998/9	1999/2000	2000/01	TOTAL	Assumptions
Learning for Life	-	5	5	5	15	Bid for 150 extra students in association with others failed. Some residual activity.
Work-based learning:						
i. original expansion of part-time numbers	-	20	30	40	90	i. Marginal costing assumes 50% surplus per student
ii. Work-based learning offsite	-	40	86	126	252	ii. Assumed £8/credit with 40% surplus
4. University of Industry credit mapping	-	1	3	3	7	
5. Continuous Professional Development (CPD)	-	2	4	4	10	
6. Overseas:						
i. Israel	-	72	72	72	216	i. Assumes £120 min fee as contract @ 40% surplus
ii. New Markets	-	-	39	39	78	ii. Assumes new market same resources.
7. FE/Community Liaison Non-core business activity and other savings	-	2	5	5	12	
Total Surplus from CLL growth	-	142	244	294	680	

TABLE 2

CENTRE FOR LIFELONG LEARNING - MODEL BUDGET 1998/9-2002/3

	1998/9	1999/2000	2000/1	2001/2	2002/3
INCOME	227,000	849,000	919,000	1,057,000	1,215,000
COSTS					
F/T Academic Salaries	20,000	234,000	237,000	275,000	315,000
F/T Admin Salaries	30,000	56,000	59,000	61,000	63,000
P/T Admin Salaries	10,000	38,000	39,000	40,000	41,000
Staff Development	-	2,500	2,600	2,700	2,800
Staff Travel	5,000	18,900	20,000	20,600	21,200
Hospitality	500	2,500	2,600	2,700	2,800
Equipment	5,000	6,200	6,500	6,700	6,900
Subscriptions	-	1,300	1,300	1,350	1,350
Materials	1,500	12,300	13,000	13,350	13,800
Publicity	5,000	12,300	13,000	13,350	13,800
Postage	2,000	5,000	5,200	5,350	5,550
Photocopying	2,000	12,300	13,000	13,350	13,800
Stationery	3,000	7,400	7,800	8,000	8,200
Telephone	1,000	3,800	3,900	4,050	4,200
Equipment Maintenance	-	1,300	1,300	1,350	1,350
Sundry	-	1,300	1,300	1,350	1,350
Admin Recharges	-	189,900	198,500	204,500	210,500
	85,000	605,000	625,000	674,700	726,600
Surplus	142,000	244,000	294,000	382,300	488,400

5 STUDENT NUMBERS

5.1 *Publicly Funded Students 1994/5-1999/2000*

5.2 *MASNs Past, Present and Future*

5. STUDENT NUMBERS

5.1 Publicly Funded Students 1994/5-1999/2000

As a resume of activity past and future of student recruitment Figure 1 (overleaf) serves to show the analysis of publicly funded students for the period 1994/5 to 1999/2000.

Mention has already been made of the difficulties involved in planning a cost effective operation to run with such wide variations of intake. An overall application is before the HEFCE to return the College's MASN to, say, 1000 students. A further specific application for 150 students mainly part-time was considered a strong one with regard to its overall approach and consistency with criteria that found favour in the Dearing Report. The result of these applications will not be available until later on in March 1998 but it is now unfortunately understood that the specific request for 150 students may not go forward to Council for further consideration.

The additional students resulting from the growth plan cannot be readily determined in the same way as traditional students. While, for example, "cohort" marketing in Israel could swell student numbers (eg 210 students from initially, say, 6 cohorts of 35 teacher training students), the financial impact is different. Further, the market plan for work-based students is based on credit/price units which again could make a direct comparison misleading.

It is preferable therefore to see growth outside the publicly funded MASNs within the criteria of the financial projections given in Section 8.

FIGURE 1

Figures taken from HESES statistics

Year	MASN	HEFCE students continuing on course	Total ITT	ITT New entrants	New entrants excluding ITT
1999/2000	826	423	86	86	317
	(Forecast)	(Forecast)			
					(estimate intake)
1998/9	838	504	191	93	143
					(estimate intake)
1997/8	898	323 - 11 self supporting	297 - 3 self supporting	84 - 2 self supporting	297 - 8 self supporting
Actual	906	312	294	82	289
1996/7	1042	278 - 4 self supporting	534 - 1 self supporting		234 - 4 self supporting
Actual	1041	274	533	144	230
1995/6	1040	258 - 3 self supporting	637 - 3 self supporting		134 - 1 self supporting
Actual	1025	255	634	149	133
1994/5	1036		726 - 3 self supporting		
Actual	1031	187	723	148	121

6 STAFFING

6.1 *Present Staffing Structure*

6.2 *Organisation*

6.3 *Staffing Policies*

6.4 *Staff Development*

6.5 *Management Structure*

6. ACADEMIC AND RELATED STAFFING

6.1 Present Staffing Structure

The complement of academic staff is as follows:

School of Professional Studies lecturers (including academic Dean)	21
School of Arts and Humanities lecturers (including academic Dean)	28
Centre (School) for Lifelong Learning (CLL)	3
Part-time and visiting lecturing staff	8 (FTE)
Principal, Deputy Principal, Dean of Students	3
Director Learning Resources Centre	1
Professorial Research Fellow	1
Graduate Teaching Assistants	4
Business Manager and Commercial Manager/ Personnel Officer	<u>2</u>
TOTAL	71 —

6.2 Organisation

Academic staff are organised into two schools and a Centre for Lifelong Learning. Academic line management is structured through Deans of Schools, and a third Dean is responsible for student affairs. Cross-school servicing is arranged through a matrix comprising academic subjects or 'departments' and programme areas, which are responsible for the delivery of the teaching time-tables of courses or modules. A majority of staff teach outside their host subject area for at least some part of the programme.

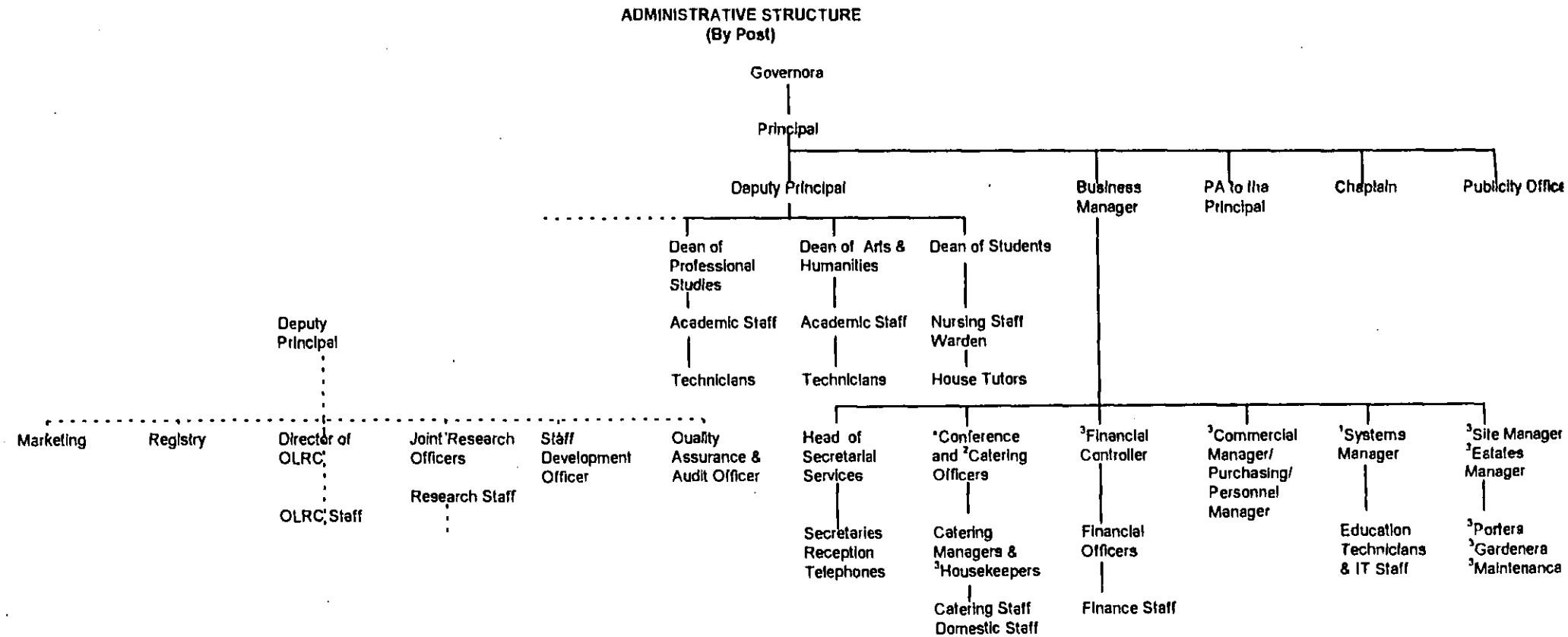
6.3 Staffing Policies

Staffing appointments in academic areas follow agreed priorities for teaching, learning and course development. The College's developing portfolio, described at section 3.4 above, requires the specification of a new range of objectives connected to the growth of lifelong learning and the expansion of professional development and work-based learning. The College Governing Body has committed £135,000 to the establishment of the CLL in 1998 and has indicated its willingness to invest up to £250,000 more over a period up to the year 2002 in the diversification of the College's curriculum offer. Such investment is contingent upon the demonstration of successful performance in the first tranche of CLL funds and upon agreed implementation strategies for the College's distinctive mission.

6.4 Staff Development

The College appoints a Staff Development Officer and allocates a substantial annual budget for this arena of work. All staff are encouraged to systematically update their skills systematically and acquire relevant advanced qualifications. Individuals are entitled to apply for 50% remission of fees for further degree study. The Staff Development Committee is chaired by the Principal/Deputy Principal and adopts an annual policy statement designed to support collegiate academic and professional priorities. Recent events have been held covering accreditation, academic audit, learning outcomes, innovative assessment methodologies, use of ICT and CAL and comparative educational systems. The College SMT has agreed to commit the whole institution to the Investors in People (IIP) award in 1998-99. Staff development is viewed as a key focus for the advancement of corporate strategic goals and for the implementation of curriculum change and professional upskilling. Staff training days and events are held throughout the teaching year and are evaluated within a feedback loop to the academic schools and the SMT. Part-time staff are encouraged to attend all staff training events.

6.5 Management Structure



In the absence of the Principal, the Business Manager would report to the Deputy Principal

KEY

* Westhill College Enterprises Co Ltd
 1 Federal service agreement

2 Executive Lease
 3 Shared Federal services

7 ESTATES

7.1 The Overall Pattern of Land Ownership

7.2 Estate Strategy and Condition of the Estate

7.3 Policy Matrix

7.4 Orchard Learning Resource Centre and Federal Service Agreements

7. ESTATES

7.1 The Overall Pattern of Land Ownership

The overall pattern of land ownership within the context of the Selly Oak Colleges federation - of which Westhill is the predominant founder member - is shown on the two following pages. It will be seen that Westhill owns two major blocks of land which encompass land leased from the Selly Oak Colleges federation. The leased land is on long term "peppercorn" rents - ie Plot A2 99 years from 24.6.68 at an annual rent of £300 and Plot A3 99 years from 26.6.68 at an annual rent of £25.

The valuation for reinstatement purposes of the Westhill estate was professionally assessed by DTZ Debenham Thorpe as £18.8m for the 1997/8 Accounts.

For all practical purposes the College is self-contained and does not rely on landholdings elsewhere to carry on its operations.

The new Learning Resources Centre (OLRC) which is part funded by HEFCE (£1.41m) and part funded by the SOC Endowment Trustees (£4m) is built on SOC Endowment Trustees' land but is managed under a formal, legally binding Management Agreement by Westhill College. The HEFCE position is protected for the future as there is mutual written agreement that the management of the OLRC is in accordance with the College's Financial Memorandum and that the College has majority voting rights throughout.

7.2. Estates Strategy and the Condition of the Estate

The full analysis of the College's Estate Strategy has been set out in three previously submitted documents: the Capital Bid for Library Development (September 1994), the agreed Estates Strategy and its Addendum (1995). The College's development plans were also "shaped" into the Master Plan concerning the Selly Oak College's campus which is approved by the Birmingham City Council (October 1996). The Master Plan is to be found in Appendix II of the 1997/2001 College Strategic Plan.

Commentary concerning the condition of the Westhill estate needs to be prefaced by the understanding that a long term policy has been adopted across the whole federation to retain a balance between open space and buildings (40%/60%). The maintenance of this policy has ensured the continuing existence of a campus of high amenity value and generally the grounds, basic infrastructure and foliage are all in excellent condition.

Buildings, which include flat-roofed 1960s/70s stock have, however, given cause for concern and a dedicated improvement programme based on a £300,000 a year long term maintenance plan phased over eight years, and already three years underway, is beginning to show a significant improvement.

The overall expenditure required during the original planned maintenance period is £1.9m which is well covered by the provision made. Extending the Plan to 8 years

incorporates some cycle maintenance requirements twice, therefore apparent variability to some values in the Appendices Series B.

More importantly, the early stages of the maintenance plan included essential works for health and safety as well as matching funds to allow the Hunter survey work to also be concluded. Also, the primary upgrading of kitchens and student accommodation is now, say, 70% completed.

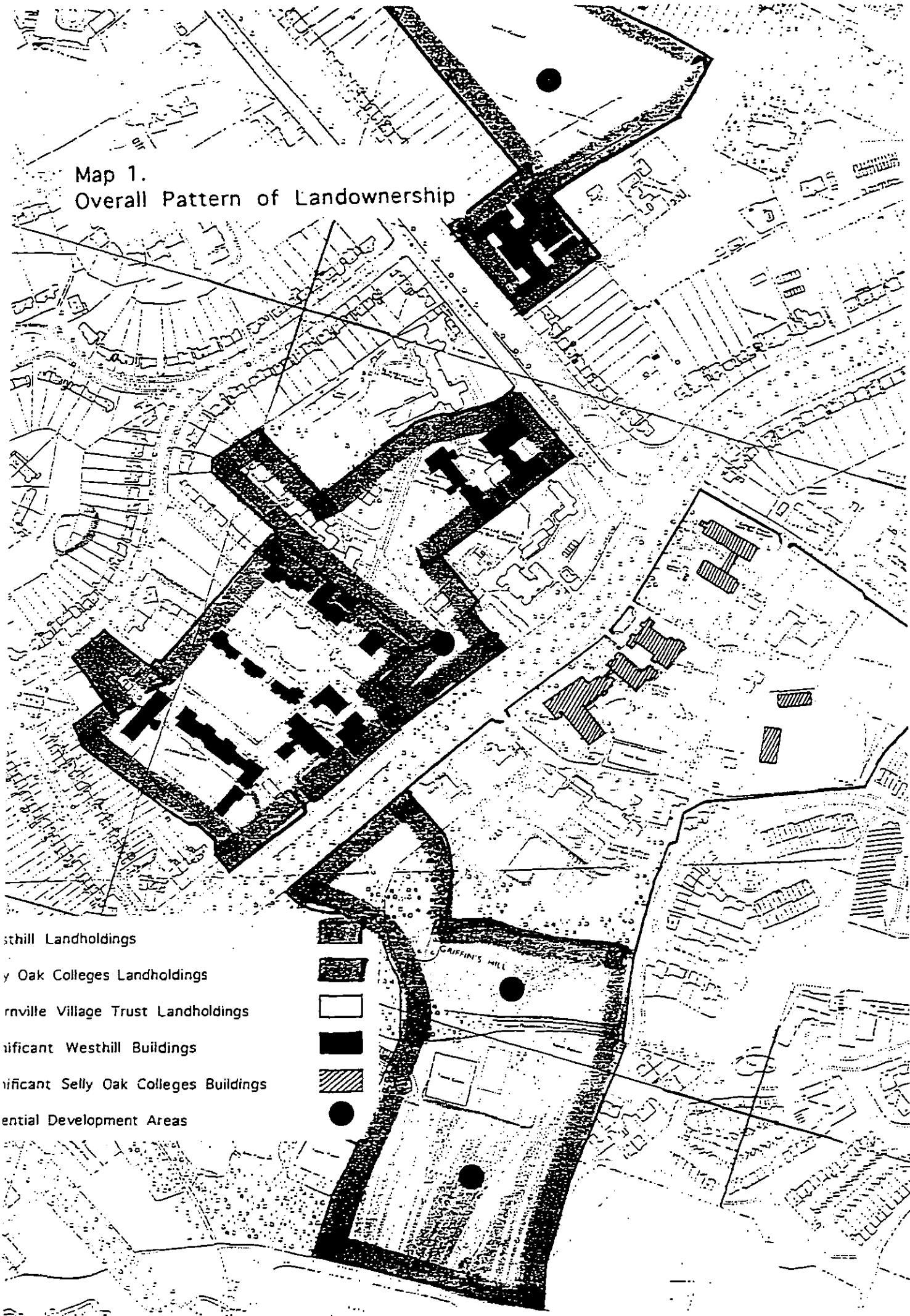
In broad outline the long term maintenance policy has been to concentrate on securing the "envelope" of all structures thereby ensuring that later work concerning internal refurbishment is not put at risk.

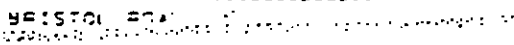
Considerable achievements have been made in cost savings and energy efficiency and all energy efficiency schemes offering short term payback periods have been undertaken. Additionally, bulk purchasing of utilities has led to significant cost reductions in this area. A key project, however, concerning heating remains with HEFCE as an application under the Poor Estates Initiative. The College has an alternative approach under consideration through a PFI arrangement with Johnson Controls with a payback period of 6-7 years.

Overall, progress on maintaining and improving the condition of the estate is satisfactory and most importantly valuable improvements have been made in the development of student resources through the construction of the new Learning Resources Centre and the development of an IT and Communications network.

The key features of the Estate Strategy are given in matrix form on the following pages and the detailed summary of expenditure on maintenance by structural elements and annual requirements, together with broad space utilisation statistics in Appendix Series B. It is clear that the College has space for growth without additional capital investment.

Map 1.
Overall Pattern of Landownership





7.3 WESTHILL POLICY MATRIX - ESTATES (UPDATE 1998 - ORIGINAL POLICY DOCUMENT 1995)

POLICY AREA	CORE BUSINESS	NEEDS ANALYSIS	PRESENT ACTIONS	PLANNED ACTIONS	KEY FACTORS	CURRENT DECISIONS
Teaching Accommodation	Yes	1. Gross internal area 15746m ² * 1a. LRC 4500 m ² 2. ASC Category Teaching space 3877 m ² At present no need for extra space.	1. Reassignment of vacated LRC space in Hamilton Building. 2. Consolidation of teaching departments. (Complete)	1. Planned long term maintenance. 2. Possible relocation of all sports and arts to a new leisure centre. 3. Re-analysis of space requirements to incorporate the CLL Division.	1. Student base less than 1000 - substantial growth possible. 2. Planned student growth likely to offer better space usage over 24 hours/annually.	1. Await outcome of applications for higher student numbers. 2. Determination of space needs when Business Plan complete.
Learning Resources Centre	Yes	1. Identified as top priority for academic development of College - resource now adequate.	4500 sq m resource opened on budget on time September 1998.	1. Snagging List within guarantee period. 2. Full exploitation of resource - federally - locally	Development of academically-sound resource - no known building implications.	Minor improvements in local amenity.
Communications	Yes	1. Severe deficit analysed in 1994/5. 2. Investment of £.8m.	1. LAN set up. 2. WAN set up. 3. Central Services established. 4. Each staff members has individual access to IT 5. Student/machine ratio is 1:	1. Maintenance upgrade. 2. Sale of Services to federation through Technical Services Agreement.	1. Technological improvements. 2. Cost of running system.	1. Replacement policy. 2. Information Strategy and MIS upgrade. 3. Cost of system monitoring and benchmarking.
Residential Accommodation	No, but strong influence on student well-being.	1. All residential accommodation consolidated and upgraded.	1. Consolidation achieved. 2. 70% upgrade but no en-suite facilities. 3. Surplus Kingsmead lease cancelled and £100k savings per annum achieved.	1. Continue upgrade. 2. Consider self-catering. 3. Consider conversion of some rooms into conference seminar rooms.	1. Effect of student loans - present evidence that market is still reducing. 2. National or local profile for College. 2a. Future alliances. 3. The downturn of MASN's.	1. Scope of second stage upgrade. 2. Self-catering. 3. Total restructure of residences.

* excluding residences

POLICY AREA	CORE BUSINESS	NEEDS ANALYSIS	PRESENT ACTIONS	PLANNED ACTIONS	KEY FACTORS	CURRENT DECISIONS
Sports Facility	Yes	1. Westhill has developed a strong presence in this area and needs better modern facilities. 2. A commercial presence to sell spare capacity considered.	1. Feasibility Study. 2. Open invitations to PFI. 3. Lottery bid under consideration.	1. Build sports/leisure centre within context of campus Master Plan.	1. Proof of market strength for Feasibility Study. 2. Provision of funds. 3. Commercial Partners.	1. Confidence in study. 2. Confident in Institution to absorb another major project and its costs.
Conference Accommodation	No	1. Opportunity exists to improve return on assets by utilising Archibald building. 2. College needs extra revenue. 3. Conference can assist in the marketing of College overall. 4. Commercial partner preferred but none found.	1. All Conference work now consolidated in one building. 2. Tender and work schedule agreed for upgrade to meet legal requirements long term.	Complete upgrade of building planned for September 1998.	1. Marketing of facility. 2. Achievement of usage targets. 3. Continuing development of cost effective operation.	1. Turning surplus residences in Archibald into seminar rooms if further fall in accommodation demand. 2. Re-survey building for cost effective restructuring of all facilities.
Surplus Accommodation	No	1. Alan Geale Building and Church Education Centre identified as surplus to College requirements.	1. Alan Geale Building taken out of mothballs and fully let at £11/sq ft 1528m ² £? 2. Deteriorated section of Church Ed now demolished and turned into car park. 3. Half remaining Church Ed building let at £11/sq ft 4. Green Room - either mothball or develop as annex to Conference Centre	Now achieved. Now achieved Now achieved Agree specification for long let with third party if contract signed.	- Quality of contract and acceptability of specification.	- To await result of quotation.

7.4 The Orchard Learning Resource Centre and the Relationships between Westhill and the Selly Oak Colleges Federation

Detailed appraisal of the Selly Oak Colleges' federation will show considerable differences between the structure of Westhill and the other Colleges, Departments and Centres within the federation.

In overall terms Westhill supports, say, 1000 FTE students, has an annual turnover of £5.5m, is accredited and publicly funded.

Other units of the federation support, say, 400 FTE students, have in combination a lesser turnover (say, £2.5m), are not directly accredited although they teach post-graduate students for the University of Birmingham and are generally privately funded.

Each affiliate member retains their own sovereignty, accounting and control bodies but seek to work in co-operation with one another when it is appropriate to do so. The idea of joint working is long established and a fund was set up in 1922 to support the development and maintenance of joint assets and activities. The "funding agency", following a split of activity in 1996 into funding and operations charities at the request of the Charities Commission, is known as the Selly Oak Colleges Endowment Trustees. These Trustees maintain and develop a range of designated and general endowment funds for the sole benefit of federal units. The investment portfolio is, say, £4m and assets are valued at say £10.1m

The operational arm, arising from the splitting of the original Trust in 1996, is known as the Council of Selly Oak Colleges Limited, generally has no funds of its own but operates some Central Departments, generally on behalf of Mission Colleges, who have no teaching arm of their own. Joint activity, both academic and practical is promoted.

In 1994 Trustees from all federal units endorsed the idea of a joint Learning Resources Centre with the principle objective of bringing together the main campus libraries to establish a common "state of the art" resource for all.

Westhill received a grant of £1.41m from HEFCE towards the project and the Selly Oak Colleges Endowment Trustees received a grant of a further £4m from a non-aligned, but generally supportive Trust - the Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust Inc.

The project was therefore conceived from the outset as a mixture of public and private finance. It was clear that Westhill was unlikely to attract a £4m gift but had a steady income flow to sustain a sizeable part of the running costs. Conversely it was clear that the SOC federation could not grow quickly enough to support an up-to-date resource on its own but it could contribute land and capital.

From the SOC federal viewpoint it was essential to ensure that its investment would be properly used and managed. By adapting the principle that Westhill should manage in accordance with "Treasury Rules" and its Financial Memorandum, professional control was assured. The formula also allows, through the assurance that the Treasury will receive repayment in case of liquidation, that the total resource can be held and maintained in SOC Statutory Accounts.

In practice the Learning Resource Centre is leased to Westhill College Enterprises Company Limited (a wholly-owned subsidiary of Westhill College) to ensure the tax efficiency of the operation.

The overall result is that the public sector benefits from a gift and the creation of a modern resource for a very modest investment and SOC can invest safely and soundly on behalf of all affiliates, including Westhill.

Concurrently, with the signing of building contracts, federal members undertook to underwrite the running costs of the OLRC according to their student numbers: subsequently Westhill set up a central IT servicing unit to ensure that all members could be linked to the Learning Resources Centre. Service Agreements currently yield £87k per annum and the Technical Services Agreement is constructed in such a way as to prevent Westhill being exposed to undue commercial risks. Appendix C demonstrates how there can be mutual advantage in circulating money throughout the federation and eliminating third party profits. Clearly, a federal unit benefits from having better economies of scale as well as the ability to carry specialists and to cover holidays for example.

8 FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS

8.1 *Essential Background*

8.2 *Projected Growth and Financial Improvement*

8.3 *Conclusion*

8.4 *Risk Analysis*

8. Financial Projections

8.1 Essential Background

It is important to understand the overall background that has influenced the College's financial planning and to appreciate that significant actions have been taken over a relatively short period of time.

During Spring of 1997 the College became aware of the impact of financial funding restrictions (albeit not to the full extent that was later set out) and commenced a restructuring programme. Figure 1 set out overleaf shows the intensity of change that was undertaken to reconstruct a break-even position on the assumption that £500k had to be saved. These moves saved the College from facing a set of immediate and possibly insurmountable financial difficulties but also, for a small college, "used up" the available cost saving opportunities. This analysis was used to support the Strategic Plan 1997-2001.

Figure 1

SURPLUS/DEFICIT	1996/7	1997/8	1998/9
£500k			Re-balance Investment profile Revalidate overall Financial Strategy
Break-even	Down-graded forecast - investment for future	Best Case	New Growth
(£500k)	Elimination of projected loss } £300k staff savings } £150k assets savings } £50k revenue savings }	Worst Case Rejected Case	
Key Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cost savings plans - Re-structuring 2 Schools - Re-structuring weak programmes - Early Retirement Scheme - Re-shape Asset Base - Appoint new key staff - HERA job evaluation - Prepare for OFSTED re-inspection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hold on to staff savings - Develop staff contract policy % permanent, % fixed term, % hours - Develop market strengths around proven diversified programmes - Develop IT service sales - federal - Develop non core activities for profit - Optimise building utilisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hold on to staff savings - Develop part-time courses - Development of information strategy as competitive tool - Use of IT in distance learning - Develop sports complex - Prepare for next Research Assessment
Key Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Loss of confidence by funders - Weak student applications - Low staff morale - OFSTED re-inspection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Confusion of restructuring and old loyalties - Loss of experience - Recourse to "old methods" to save costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Part-time growth slow take off - Energy "loss" with staff if growth, stability not apparent - Still too small a player in West Midlands pool

* Conscious decision not to put for a deficit budget

The Strategic Plan submission, however, had to be adjusted as it became clear that funding provisions had fallen further than the College had anticipated. The following analysis (Figure 2) shows how in the period July 1997 to February 1998 there were further downward movements. These have been shown net of any growth projections.

It will be seen that on a "do nothing" scenario the College has had to react to a four year (200/2001) movement in projected accumulated losses of £657k to £1.735k. Such a movement would eliminate College cash availability by 1999 and would require recourse to Trustee Investments of, say, £½m in the following year if a balanced budget is to be achieved.

Figure 2: Financial Projections (Worse Case)

SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR					
	1997/98 £K	1998/99 £K	1999/2000 £K	2000/2001 £K	TOTAL £K
Original Strategic Plan July 1997	-	(153)	(263)	(241)	(657)
Amended Strategic Plan after TTA & HEFCE Core Grants Clarification (sent to TTA Sept 1997)	(21)	(205)	(357)	(383)	(966)
Restated after losing 20 students from 1998/99 MASN - say £70k pa	(21)	(275)	(427)	(453)	(1176)
Allowance for TTA INSET Grants reduction	-	(44)	(89)	(133)	(266)
Extract Expansion of Conference/Part-time Student Fee Surpluses	(49)	(69)	(82)	(93)	(293)
Revised Worst-Case Plan	(70)	(388)	(598)	(679)	(1735)
Cash at Bank - Original Estimate	1237	1036	756	499	
Cash at Bank - Worst-Case Estimate	1167	731	116	(579)	

Notwithstanding the above analysis this would still leave the College with substantial investments, say, £1m and land and buildings worth £18.8m on the most recent valuations.

Projected Growth and Financial Improvement

The College's growth plans are primarily centred on the Centre for Lifelong Learning where all improvements in the student fee income have been incorporated, and through the growth of Conferences.

The summary of growth through the Centre for Lifelong Learning (CLL) and Conferences is set out in Figure 3 below, together with the impact on the College's forecast bottom line. The vital importance of alliances (Pages 9 and 10), the success of the CLL Plan (Pages 22-36) and generating other cost efficiencies becomes apparent. Equally, the necessity to have support funds ready for allocation to grow

Figure 3: Summary of Growth (£000s)

Core Business Activity	1997/8	1998/9	1999/2000	2000/01	TOTAL	Assumptions
1. Return MASN to 1000 students	-	170	170	170	510	Band 1 Arts & Humanities @ £2,500 each
2. Learning for Life	-	5	5	5	15	Bid for 150 extra students in association with others failed. Some residual activity.
3. Work-based learning:						
i. original expansion of part-time numbers	-	20	30	40	90	i. Marginal costing assumes 50% surplus per student
ii. Work-based learning offsite	-	40	86	126	252	ii. Assumed £8/credit with 40% surplus
4. University of Industry credit mapping	-	1	3	3	7	
5. Continuous Professional Development (CPD)	-	2	4	4	10	
6. Overseas:						
i. Israel	-	72	72	72	216	i. Assumes £120 min fee as contract @ 40% surplus
ii. New Markets	-	-	39	39	78	ii. Assumes new market same resources.
7. FE/Community Liaison	-	2	5	5	12	
Non-core business activity and other savings	-	-	-	-	-	
8. Conferences - new business	49	49	52	53	203	£250k sales achieved so far. Target of £280 in last 6 months looks achievable.
9. Estates Savings	-	50	50	50	150	Assumes interior work not vital and can be rephased.
Total New Business and Savings	49	411	516	567	1543	
Revised Surplus/Deficit	(21)	65	(40)	(70)	(66)	
Revised Cashflow	1216	1233	1176	1090	-	
Contingency Allocation of Trustee Funds	-	100	100	100	300	

and sustain a new business is apparent since there are clear risks to be faced. (See Risk Analysis Pages 57 and 58.)

Conclusion

The College's Financial Strategy has proved to be a sound approach and does allow some time for adjustment to revised circumstances viz:

Elements of Westhill Financial Strategy

Westhill wishes its Financial Strategy overall to be consistent with its Free Church principles and its membership of the federation of Selly Oak Colleges. Westhill recognises that as a College with only, say, 1,000 students and present funding split between the TTA and the HEFCE, the College could be vulnerable to government policy overall and weakened (or threatened) as a result of changes in funding regulations.

The College therefore resolves that its Financial Strategy should ensure:

1. adequate investment and cash reserves, and a low level of borrowing to buy time in the advent of difficult circumstances;
2. to maintain sufficient financial strengths overall to ensure that the College does not have to enter into a "recovery regime" with funding authorities.
 - a. To seek to have one source of funding.
 - b. To maintain agreed commitments with the funding authorities to avoid undue investigation into the College's affairs e.g. Estate Strategy and audit recommendations.
3. to invest funds to achieve student growth plans and to accept the cost of change to adapt vigorously to ensure long-term viability;
4. to use the strengths and facilities of the Selly Oak Colleges federation through the medium of realistic long-term agreements but without jeopardising the College's own financial strengths;
5. to eliminate any operating loss-making situation and to be active in income generation in its non-core businesses including the use of PFI/ joint venture.

The present financial projections give rise to serious concerns for the future and should show, despite strong efforts, how the viability of a small operation can be put at risk by policies largely outside its control. Such circumstances as set out make it clear that the College would benefit from a substantial alliance if there is to be the underlying stability for future diversification.

8.4 Risk Analysis

The key risks that confront the College are:

1. Risk - Staff

Staff concern and willingness to support a continually changing scenario and to adapt to new needs.

a. Appraisal

The changes in the Summer have left the College with a younger, vital and more adaptable staff team, nevertheless there remains a substantial gap between the academic environment and the more commercially-orientated work-based learning market place.

2. Risk - Market

The general work-based market is very active and is confused by many approaches to employers. There is a risk that Westhill's Higher Education product offer will find it hard to gain attention and that growth will be slower than anticipated. Developing overseas markets are particularly vulnerable to change.

a. Appraisal

UK

The size of the work-based market place is encouraging and the general environment supportive. The application of sound marketing and sales policies which will appear new to the College are required from the outset.

b. Overseas Markets

Growth in one market place (eg Israel) is vulnerable but the techniques used to grow that market and develop resources are readily adaptable elsewhere.

3. Risk - Negotiating Strategic Alliances

The College's requirements are of utmost importance and require urgent attention. Proposed partners may not share the same attitudes and their decision-making processes may be slow.

a. Appraisal

The strategy set out of identifying and dealing with several potential partners (concurrently if necessary) is a reasonable defence.

4. Risk - Control and Sovereignty

The College presently is attracting attention (albeit helpfully) from the Funding Council and Consultants. This leads to further uncertainty within a situation that is inherently unstable and could result in a "stalemate" situation.

a. Appraisal

It is important that the Governors own the new Plan and that the Management set about convincing staff of the validity and appropriateness of the new Plan for the College's long-term future.

9. Action Plan

Sheet A	Items 1-6	Strategic Alliances
Sheet B	Items 1-3	Relationship with Funders
Sheet C	Items 1-4	CLL Arrangements
Sheet D	Items 1-6	Estates

The following Action Plans arise for the broad scope of this Plan and generally concern the initial stages of activity: they will be reviewed each 12 months on the anniversary of this Plan.

ACTION PLAN STRATEGIC ALLIANCES - KEY DATE FOR COMPLETION - 1ST QUARTER 1999

MAIN ACTION	KEY STEPS	DATE FOR COMPLETION	PROGRESS
1. Develop broader based Accreditation Agreement with University of Birmingham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Present cases to Accreditation Committee - Renegotiate Agreement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Immediate - 1998/9 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First stage of wider agreement secured February 1998 (original scheme)
2. Develop stronger alliance with University of Birmingham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investigate scope and legal requirements for preferred model of alliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 6 months Heads of Agreement, 12-18 months to complete 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussions ongoing - Lawyers making preliminary investigation and considering Charities Act
3. Develop a stronger alliance with Oxford Brookes University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Determine if single or dual alliance - Determine model of alliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If proceeding Heads of Agreement 6-9 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initial meetings planned early March
4. Investigate further the opportunity identified with the University of Central England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gain understanding of the precise nature of present offer - Negotiate revised offer if appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 8 weeks/May - Open 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initial meetings have taken place
5. Investigate opportunities	For each Institution: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Determine model of alliance - Determine if single or dual alliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - April 1998 - May 1998 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initial discussions have taken place
6. Renegotiate Agreement with Federation of Selly Oak Colleges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Re-examine the contribution each one can make - academic/physical resources - Negotiate appropriate new Model of Agreement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Heads of Agreement 1.1.99 - 1.6.99 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ongoing

ACTION PLAN RELATIONSHIP WITH FUNDERS

MAIN ACTION	KEY STEPS	DATE FOR COMPLETION	PROGRESS
1. Ascertain if MASN can be restored to 1000 level to stabilise the College	- Negotiation with HEFCE	- 1.4.98	- Initial application made February 1998
2. Determine the changeover (or otherwise) of lead accountant TTA/HEFCE	- Receive evidence of Department of Education consideration (information important to alliance/policy)	- Immediate/asap	- Regular discussions subject throughout this Plan exercise
3. Secure acceptance of this Plan and Agreement on review stages	- Formal presentation of Plan from Westhill Governors to Funding Authorities	- End March 1998	- Draft Plan review 27.2.98

ACTION PLAN (CLL)

MAIN ACTION	KEY STEPS	DATE FOR COMPLETION	PROGRESS
1. <u>Appoint Staff</u> - Director - Programme Leader - Secretary	- Advertise - Interview - Contract - Induction Programme	- Immediate - Up to end March - March/May - August-Sept (or prior)	- Done - Ongoing
2. Sales Plan	- Develop detailed Business Plan - Set targets - Set MIS system	- Sept 1998 - Sept 1998 - Sept 1998	- Preparatory work being undertaken
3. Academic and Quality backup for all aspects of CLL	- Identify supporting networkers - Set up Programme - Set Quality Control procedures	- Sept-Dec 1998 - Sept-Dec 1998 - Sept-Dec 1998	- Initial discussions undertaken with our existing staff on CLL proposal
4. Assign existing full or part time College staff of any	- Identify any staff with key ability or knowledge - Negotiate contract amendment - Retrain into team	- June 1998 - Open - Open	- Initial Senior Management Team discussions
5. Monitor sales progress	- Monthly trend analysis - Account potential analysis	- Ongoing - Ongoing	

ACTION PLAN ESTATES

MAIN ACTION	KEY STEPS	DATE FOR COMPLETION	PROGRESS
1. Examine space utilisation opportunities with new alliance/partner	- Space survey against new need	- Open	- Open
2. Residential Accommodation	- Review policy on residences and student offers (eg self-catering)	-September 1998	
3. Sports Facility (Lottery/PFI)	- Feasibility Study - Application for funds - Project Team and Build	- Jan 1999 - March 1999 - Nov/Dec 1999	- Feasibility Study underway
4. Conference Accommodation Archibald	- Complete refurbishment - Complete licence application - Target sales plan over £280k per annum	- Sept 1998 - June 1998 - Sept 1998	- Out to tender - Licence applied for - Present sales on target
5. Recost Condition Survey for annual savings of £50k	- Resurvey in conjunction with professional auditors	- June 1998	
6. Land analysis for possible sale and investigation of federal leases	- set up "land terrier" - revalue within next year's 1998/9 accounts	- June 1998 - June 1998	- SOC Deeds identified and revalued

APPENDICES

- A. Proposal for the CLL School: Advertisements and Job Descriptions for the Director, Programme Leader and Secretary; Prospectus**
- B. Estates Statistical Information**
- C. Federal IT Services**



**WESTHILL COLLEGE
OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

CENTRE FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

Westhill College is seeking to appoint the following personnel to establish and develop its dynamic new Centre for Lifelong Learning:

Director: To be responsible for the academic and business activities of the Centre. S/he will be expected to demonstrate a track record in the development, management and delivery of innovative education and/or training programmes in either or both the private and public sectors.
Salary range: £23,123-£26,210 p.a.

Programme Manager: To support the Director in devising and implementing the business plan of the Centre.
Salary range: £15,411-£20,041 p.a.

Administrator/Secretary (part-time): To provide a full administrative and secretarial service to the Centre.
Salary range: £11,208-£12,026 p.a. pro rata

All appointments are for a fixed-term period of two years in the first instance.

* * *

Application forms and further details from:

Ms S. Anderson, Commercial Manager
Westhill College of Higher Education
14-16 Weoley Park Road
Selly Oak
Birmingham B29 6LL

Tel. No. 0121-415 2212 Fax No. 0121-415 5399
EMail: a.moore@sellyoak.ac.uk

Closing date: 2nd February 1998

Westhill College strives to be an Equal Opportunities employer

WESTHILL COLLEGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Centre for Lifelong Learning

Director of the Centre for Lifelong Learning

Post Specification

The Director post will carry responsibility for the academic and business activities of the Centre. S/he will be expected to demonstrate a track record in the development, management and delivery of innovative education and/or training programmes in either or both the private and public sectors. No specific academic or professional specialism is required for this post, however, an awareness of a range of innovative educational and training issues and themes will be an initial requirement.

The post will be at a senior level within the College and the successful candidate will be expected to contribute towards and receive the full benefits of college membership. The Centre will comprise a third strand of academic and professional activity alongside the Schools of Arts and Humanities and Professional Studies. The Director will be accountable to the Principal and Deputy Principal of the College and will work closely with the three College Deans and the College Business Manager.

The Centre for Lifelong Learning is essentially an enterprise unit within the College and is expected to utilise the existing resources of the College in addition to its own, to achieve its objectives and targets. The Director is expected to be entrepreneurial in the approach and methods used to generate activity, resources and income for the College. A range of initiatives is underway and will become the direct responsibility on a day-to-day basis of the Centre. The Director is expected to develop new initiatives in order to deliver strategic change for the College within measurable time periods and to plan and manage budgets in accordance with business strategy.

Qualifications, skills and experience required:

- Degree or equivalent educational and professional qualifications; a postgraduate degree or equivalent professional status will be an advantage but is not a requirement of the post
- A demonstrable record of achievement in education or a related field from industry and commerce
- Willingness to innovate and contribute to the fields of education, training, professional development and work-based learning
- Ability to strategically plan, manage and expand programmes of learning
- Experience in the management of staff and resources
- Credibility and professional leadership in the field of 'lifelong learning'

Director of the Centre for Lifelong Learning (continued)

- IT literacy up to PC user level for communication purposes
- Familiarity with systems of work-based learning; open learning and professional continuing development (CPD)
- Entrepreneurial skills with recognition of the social purposes of public sector Higher Education

Person Specification

- Aptitude for developing and sharing a vision of lifelong learning
 - Adaptability and flexibility
 - High level of motivation to succeed
 - Ability to communicate effectively, orally and in writing
 - Willingness to work a non-traditional timetable
 - Capacity to motivate and enthuse others
 - Excellent interpersonal skills
 - Ability to work with minimal supervision to achieve targets within deadlines
-

Salary range: £23,123-£26,210 p.a.

Conditions of Employment

The Director of the Centre for Lifelong Learning is an academic member of staff. In order to meet the requirements of this new initiative, the postholder is expected to adapt a flexible working pattern.

The Director is entitled to 35 working days annual holiday in addition to statutory holidays.

This appointment is for a fixed-term period of two years in the first instance.

WESTHILL COLLEGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Centre for Lifelong Learning

Programme Manager

Qualifications, Skills and Experience Required

- Degree or equivalent educational and/or professional qualification
- Knowledge and experience of work within the field of education or curriculum development, or equivalent expertise acquired in business, industry or public service
- IT literacy or the aptitude to acquire and apply it quickly
- Experience of devising and implementing organisational systems
- Knowledge of industry-based training and qualifications
- Ability and willingness to develop and adapt ideas in practical settings
- Knowledge and/or experience of Higher Education and/or Further Education and/or Adult and Continuing Education would be an advantage

Post Specification

The person selected will have complementary abilities and tasks to that of the Director of the Centre for lifelong learning and will:

- Support the Director in devising and implementing the business plan of the Centre
- Manage the various programmes of the Centre in conjunction with Westhill staff and other members of the Centre who may be within industry or public service
- Work closely with the Deans and staff of the two academic schools to deliver programmes
- Develop new programmes and help implement the strategic plan of the Centre
- Teach on courses and programmes as appropriate and/or contribute to course and curriculum development across the Centre and College.
- Devise, develop and disseminate learning materials, including those needed for student support and guidance
- Contribute to the development of a culture of lifelong learning and its practical implementation through the Centre

Programme Manager (continued)

Person Specification

- Ability to manage teaching and learning programmes
 - Adaptability and responsiveness to fast changing environments
 - Excellent communication skills
 - Interpersonal skills of a high order
 - Capacity to work unsupervised
 - Willingness to accept responsibility
 - Able to set own targets and evaluate performance
 - Team membership skills and competence
 - Written and oral skills to a high degree of competence
-

Salary range: £15,411-£20,041 p.a.

Conditions of Employment

The Programme Manager of the Centre for Lifelong Learning is an academic member of staff. In order to meet the requirements of this new initiative, the postholder is expected to adapt a flexible working pattern.

The Programme Manager is entitled to 35 working days annual holiday in addition to statutory holidays.

This appointment is for a fixed-term period of two years in the first instance.

WESTHILL COLLEGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Centre for Lifelong Learning

Islamic Learning Co-ordinator

Qualifications, skills and experience required

- Degree or equivalent educational or professional qualification; a higher degree will be an advantage but is not a requirement of the post.
- An understanding of the contexts of 'lifelong learning', especially in relation to the educational and training needs of Muslim communities and individuals.
- A demonstrable record of achievement in education and/or related fields covered within the Islamic faith community.
- Willingness to innovate and contribute to the fields of education, training and professional development for Muslim communities.
- Experience in the production of learning materials, including guidance and support for students from Muslim communities.
- Entrepreneurial skills necessary for the development of partnerships between Muslim communities in need of access to education and training and the Centre for Lifelong Learning.
- Ability to develop income bearing programmes and funded schemes.
- Familiarity with innovative methods of curriculum development and delivery suitable for Muslim learners at all appropriate ages and stages of their learning careers.

Person Specification

- Ability to liaise between the Centre, Westhill College and Muslim learners at local, regional and, where appropriate, national level.
- Excellent communication and language skills.
- Highly developed and applied interpersonal skills necessary for the tasks set for the post.
- Willingness to perform as a team member, both within the Centre and the wider College.
- Aptitude for self-starting in the generation of programmes, courses and fundable ventures.

Islamic Learning Co-ordinator (continued)

- Understanding and sympathy with the economic and cultural features of Muslim communities.
 - Understanding and sympathy with the wider mission of Westhill College to serve a range of ethnic and faith communities.
-

Salary range: £13,871-£20,041 p.a.

Conditions of Employment

The Islamic Learning Co-ordinator of the Centre for Lifelong Learning is an academic member of staff. In order to meet the requirements of this new initiative, the postholder is expected to adapt a flexible working pattern.

The Islamic Learning Co-ordinator is entitled to 35 working days annual holiday pro rata in addition to any statutory holidays which fall within the period of employment.

This appointment is for a fixed-term period of two years in the first instance.

WESTHILL COLLEGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Centre for Lifelong Learning

Administrator/Secretary (Part-time)

Post Specification: Qualifications and skills

- An academic qualification or its equivalent professional qualification or status.
- A demonstrable record of recent achievement in the fields of administrative support, including managing record systems.
- Provision of full administrative services for the Centre for Lifelong Learning.
- Supervision of office systems, communication and records of planning and strategic developments for the Centre.
- Produce reports on all appropriate matters.
- Manage databases and computer-based records for the Centre.
- Provision of secretarial support and secretarial services to staff of the Centre.
- A high degree of competence in IT and wordprocessing skills
- Proven secretarial and administrative expertise

Person specification

- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills
- Ability to work with minimum supervision and to complete tasks on time
- A proactive and business-like approach
- Accuracy and attention to detail
- An understanding and commitment to the aims and objectives of the Centre

Administrator/Secretary (continued)

Salary range: £11,208-£12,026 p.a. pro rata

Conditions of Employment

The Administrator/Secretary is a part-time member of the resources staff team.

Hours of work: 30 hours per week

Annual holiday entitlement: 20 working days pro rata plus any public holidays which fall within the Administrator/Secretary's normal working week

Pension: A contributory pension scheme is provided by the Selly Oak Colleges

This appointment is for a fixed-term period of two years in the first instance.

WESTHILL COLLEGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Centre for Lifelong Learning: A Prospectus

1. Introduction

For maximum impact on learning opportunities there is a need to extend existing and emerging provision to people, where and when they require it. Everyone, in the workplace, the home, in local communities and centres should have lifelong access to a range of supported learning activities at the levels they need.

Westhill College has established a Centre for lifelong learning in order to ensure that as a provider of education, training and professional development it is at the forefront of educational developments in the year 2000 and beyond. Professional and academic knowledge demands a dynamic curriculum which cannot be restricted to the academy or campus alone. The Centre will encourage the growth of learning opportunities wherever they occur and will seek to generate new knowledge in partnership with learners in a variety of sites of learning. Such new knowledge will, it is anticipated, require new forms and methods of accreditation and this focus will be supported by the work of the Centre.

2. Key Activities of the Centre for Lifelong Learning

The key activities of the Centre will cohere around the Westhill College mission, in particular that of facilitating access to learning for previously excluded individuals or groups. The Centre will be concerned with extending these learning and accreditation opportunities previously delivered on the College's Selly Oak campus to potential students in learning communities, including those of the workplace, which are far beyond the physical bounds of the college. The core activities will include promoting and marketing learning, brokering learning opportunities, providing information and guidance, commissioning educational development, accrediting and assuring the quality of course provision with which the College is associated and developing the educational principles of personal, professional and workplace learning. The Centre will devise and deliver a range of innovative programmes which are relevant to the vision of lifelong learning.

3. Core Functions:

* Promotion and Marketing of Learning Opportunities

- Profile the needs, lifestyles and expectations of key client groups.

- Exploit the strengths and traditions of the public provision promoted by the College.
- Connect the curriculum expertise of the College with that of industry and commerce, locally, regionally and where appropriate nationally.
- Target key target groups and learners.
- Establish a high profile and brand for Westhill's professional and workplace learning schemes.

* Brokerage

- Provide and market learning opportunities to individuals and companies.
- Target particular groups in order to meet priorities.
- Establish direct relationships with learners and centres of the 'University for Industry' and the 'National Learning Grid'.
- Adapt and reshape existing programmes of education to meet new needs.
- Give advice, guidance and support to all potential lifelong learners.

* Commissioning

- Develop flagship programmes of relevant, accessible and high quality provision capable of generating and sustaining fee income.
- Stimulate new partnerships across the public and private sectors of employment.
- Support and develop solutions to learning access which utilise the new communication technologies.
- Encourage and build networks so that 'communities of interest' are able to benefit from and contribute to the development of the College.
- Commission research relevant to the work of the Centre.

* Market Analysis and Strategic Planning

- Identify critical economic, social and educational trends which will impact upon the College's provision and programmes for lifelong learning.

- Anticipate future knowledge and skill needs to which the College can respond.
- Analyse research and act as a source for information gathering and intelligence.
- Act as a 'market-maker' helping to create demands for Westhill's educational resources and opportunities amongst a variety of public and learning communities.

4. Initial Programmes

The Centre will take responsibility for the following teaching and learning programmes and activities from 1998 onwards:

- * **'Learning for Life'** - a part-time modular awards programme based upon the Combined Studies Awards Scheme approved by the University of Birmingham and involving the HEFCE widening access proposals
- * **Work-based learning** - a programme of personal and professional development for industry-based learners
- * **Israeli B.Phil and Masters Degree Distance Learning Programmes**
- * **Westhill's University for Industry pilot programme** (in association with IMC and Oxford Brooks University)
- * **Credit mapping and credit rating industry-based training courses** through APEL
- * **Islamic Learning Communities Project** which will promote partnerships for education and community development (including where appropriate business interests and training)

5. Staffing

The initial staffing complement will be:

Director of the Centre

Programme Manager(s)

Islamic Learning Co-ordinator

Centre Administrator/Secretary

CENTRE MEMBERSHIP

Fellows

Professor Richard Teare
Oxford Brooks University

Professor Richard Dealtry
International Management Centre, Buckingham

Dr Gaie Davidson Burnett
Director of Research and Statistics, Universities Council for the Admission of
Students (UCAS)

Reverend Dr Stephen Sizer
Vicar, Virginia Water, Surrey

APPENDIX "B"

SUMMARY OF COSTS BY BUILDING BY YEAR

Building Name	TYPE	1	2	3 (1997/8)	4	5	6	7	8	TOTAL
GRAND TOTAL		401,011	309,347	171,285	204,835	118,115	149,950	139,250	108,410	1,602,203

BUILDING REFERENCE	Building Name	TYPE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	TOTAL
BLOCK C	Hamilton	Teaching	4,910	6,585	5,930	3,060	2,630	2,400	1,900	1,500	28,915
BLOCK D	Teaching Centre	Teaching	36,556	28,527	21,300	13,720	14,110	3,250	7,750	3,250	128,463
BLOCK F	Frank Price Building	Teaching	3,520	10,810	12,860	9,200	3,680	3,700	2,500	2,500	48,770
BLOCK K	Sports Centre / Gym	Teaching	3,190	2,760	340	60	210	4,000	1,000	1,000	12,560
BLOCK O	Quiet Room & Offices	Teaching	510	1,020	2,560	610	60	0	0	0	4,760
BLOCK P	Terrapin Building No 2	Teaching	200	50	3,050	50	1,600	50	50	50	5,100
BLOCK R	The Link Block	Teaching	1,935	3,925	25	385	3,085	0	0	0	9,355
BLOCK S	Mary Burnie House	Teaching	17,380	33,000	29,500	2,000	0	17,200	10,000	5,000	114,080
BLOCK T	Terrapin Building No 1	Teaching	430	700	60	1,160	60	4,400	600	60	7,470
BLOCK U	Terrapin Building No 3	Teaching	100	150	150	1,100	0	0	0	0	1,500
BROOKS BANK	Brooks Bank Centre	Teaching	350	75	750	1,145	0	0	1,000	0	3,320
		Area Type Total	69,081	87,602	76,525	32,490	25,435	35,000	24,800	13,360	364,293

BUILDING REFERENCE	Building Name	TYPE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	TOTAL
BLOCK A	Refractory & Chapel	Other	5,930	5,550	4,235	2,925	1,500	2,100	3,000	3,000	28,240
BLOCK B	Melville Hall	Other	3,510	3,240	4,700	2,380	1,770	1,470	470	470	18,010
BLOCK H	Maintenance Department	Other		490	1,890	5,300		1,500			9,180
	External Areas	Other	93,565	62,375	8,360	8,530	2,460	5,000	5,000	5,000	190,290
	Gardeners Compound	Other	6,805	2,490	2,260		2,500	100	100	100	14,355
	1067 Bristol Road	Other	5,900	2,250	3,100	3,750	0	0	0	0	15,000
BLOCK L	Alan Geale House	Other	21,750	12,930	7,030	10,260	3,160	14,700	1,200	200	71,230
		Area Type Total	137,460	89,325	31,575	33,145	11,390	24,870	9,770	8,770	346,305

BUILDING REFERENCE	Building Name	TYPE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	TOTAL
BLOCK E	Barrow Cadbury House	Residential	92,350	7,100	4,000	48,000	48,600	39,500	39,500	39,500	318,550
BLOCK M	Johnston House	Residential	34,670	88,160	120	7,320	120	10,000	8,000	8,000	156,390
	No 2 Close	Residential	3,550	1,150	4,270	5,370	0	2,500	0	3,000	19,840
	No's 1A & 1B Close	Residential	4,210	4,090	2,410	3,750	0	5,000	1,500	4,000	24,960
	No's 3A & 3B Close	Residential	9,700	1,920	5,120	4,120	120	5,100	0	0	26,080
	No's 4,5A & 5B Close	Residential	13,840	2,720	4,180	6,420	11,580	4,000	9,500	16,800	69,040
45 WEOLEY HILL	Principals House	Residential - Staff	2,460	1,450	950	800	4,700	230	230	230	11,050
BLOCK J	Caretakers Bungalow	Residential - Staff	2,490	1,760	2,800	250	250	250	250	250	8,300
		Area Type Total	163,270	108,350	23,850	76,030	65,370	66,580	58,980	71,780	634,210

BUILDING REFERENCE	Building Name	TYPE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	TOTAL
	No's 10 & 11 Kingsmead Close	Conference	8,975	4,620	60	3,060	60	11,000	6,700	2,000	36,475
BLOCK G	Archibald House	Conference / Residential	22,225	19,450	39,275	60,110	15,860	12,500	39,000	12,500	220,920
	Archibald Annex	Conference / Residential	Figures included in above								0
		Area Type Total	31,200	24,070	39,335	63,170	15,920	23,500	45,700	14,500	257,395

SUMMARY OF COSTS BY ELEMENT

SUMMARY OF COSTS by ELEMENT	95/96	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/2001	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	
ELEMENT	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	YEAR 6	YEAR 7	YEAR 8	TOTAL
Chimneys & Flues	7,406	6,250	800	0	0	0	0	0	14,456
Structures above Roof Level	660	1,000	0	2,000	0	0	0	0	3,660
Parapets, Cornices and Copings	2,050	3,895	400	500	0	0	0	0	6,845
Roof Coverings - Pitched	33,135	0	4,000	2,400	0	0	0	0	39,535
roof Coverings - Flat	79,598	46,990	9,650	0	320	1,000	0	0	137,558
Rooflights, Laylights, Dormers	6,710	0	3,100	0	0	0	0	0	9,810
Rainwater Goods, Pipes and Gutters	2,570	10,110	6,480	310	6,140	0	0	0	25,610
Eaves, Soffits and Fascias	9,590	4,160	2,675	1,050	0	0	0	0	17,475
Cladding and Curtain Walling	1,715	6,765	275	41,850	25	0	0	0	50,630
Structural Walls and Frames	18,152	15,533	26,740	3,520	2,620	3,500	3,500	3,500	77,065
Structural General	3,020	720	620	620	620	100	100	100	5,900
External Works, Pavings, Walls, Gates, Cycle Sheds Etc	97,773	65,975	12,010	10,540	4,570	5,550	5,050	5,050	206,518
External Decorations	28,940	12,500	15,750	4,500	4,200	9,400	10,500	0	85,790
External Total	291,319	173,898	82,500	67,290	18,495	19,550	19,150	8,650	680,852
Engineering Matters, Heaters Etc	6,790	150	150	4,000	0	0	0	0	11,090
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Attic Spaces, Roof Voids-	11,300	5,000	2,240	5,300	6,500	11,000	0	0	41,340
Circulation Spaces, Landings and Staircases	8,455	6,835	8,140	6,770	1,130	7,200	0	0	38,530
Floors, Walls and Ceilings	22,050	67,790	27,625	11,415	7,485	5,000	10,500	7,860	159,725
Windows and Doors	32,000	16,230	5,910	66,480	57,640	38,200	58,700	38,200	313,360
Kitchens and Welfare Rooms	4,210	8,920	6,500	6,515	0	8,500	2,500	7,000	44,145
Toilets and Sanitary Accommodation	12,847	6,954	15,170	9,915	5,415	4,300	3,500	8,100	66,201
Internal Drainage	2,930	160	130	130	130	70	70	70	3,690
Basements	3,560	1,190	120	1,420	120	0	0	0	6,410
Internal Decorations	5,550	22,220	22,800	25,600	21,200	56,130	44,830	38,530	236,860
Internal Total	109,692	135,449	88,785	137,545	99,620	130,400	120,100	99,760	921,351
Grand Total	401,011	309,347	171,285	204,835	118,115	149,950	139,250	108,410	1,602,203

% SPACE UTILISATION AT WESTHILL COLLEGE

		0830-1630	1630-2230	WEEKENDS
Brooksbank	02	29	5	
	03	55	12	
	04	32	3	
	Hall	38	1	
Frank Price	04	43	-	
	05	41	4	
	12	43	11	
	13	27	-	
	14	42	12	
Gym		46	-	
Hamilton Hall		36	1	
Unit M		30	-	
Mary Burnie	70	30	8	
	71	31	7	
	72	31	13	
	73	17	7	
	74	16	7	
	75	16	-	
Music		31	1	
Teaching Centre	1A	45	-	
	1B	45	-	
	02	43	-	
	06	40	-	
	07A	37	-	
	07B	44	-	
	08	37	-	
	16	41	-	
	19	44	-	
	20	49	-	
	30	65	-	
	32	17	-	
	35	42	-	
	37	23	-	
	46	27	-	
	48	28	-	
	53	26	-	
	Hall	60	4	

Archibald Conference Centre 0830-2230 - present utilisation approx. 20% outside bookings only - also used for internal meetings regularly.

WITCS Income to date

IT SERVICES TO THE FEDERATION OF SELLY OAK COLLEGES

College/Centre	Date signed	TSA Value	Additional work
Fircroft College	15/8/97	£3,800	£745
United Coll. of Ascension	23/9/97	£3,978.85	£210
Westhill - School of Prof. Studies	30/9/97	£3,500	£11,380
Westhill - School of Arts & Humanities	30/9/97	£3,500	£11,800
St Andrew's Hall	8/10/97	£2,410	£80
Islam dept.	6/11/97	£2,440	£915
Orchard Centre	21/11/97	£6,550	£8,484
English dept.	26/11/97	£2,410	£274
President's Office	26/11/97	£2,410	
Social Studies dept.	1/12/97	£4,170	£540
Christians in Public Life	2/12/97	£2,800	
Mission dept.	23/1/98	£2,410	£270
SOC installation (depts)		£6,812.50	
Springdale College			£100
Crowther Hall			£20
Univ. of Minnesota	12/1/98	£3,132	£245
Westhill - Research dept.	3/2/98	£2,200	
Indiv. student logins			£195
TOTAL		£52,523.35	£35,258

This gives a grand total to date of **£87,781.35** (vat not included)

N.B. Technical Services Agreements run for 12 months from the date of signing, except for Westhill Schools, the Research department and the Orchard Centre, which are backdated to the start of the academic year (1st August 1997).

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**The changing financial prospects of Westhill since the summer of 1997**

1. It was subsequent to the appointment of David Davies and myself that it was recognised by the College that the consequences of the 1995 OFSTED failure were being applied across all previously funded TTA student numbers. BEDs converting to BAs as well as PGCEs. Accordingly the College MASN was reduced more radically than anticipated with a consequential loss of funds. Student numbers and associated finances were mitigated in a very limited way by the subsequent re-inspection of Primary PGCE Language work (which secured a grade of 'good').
2. My first act as Principal, before formally taking up post, was to communicate this changed situation to staff in August before the change of regulations in the Teachers' Pension Scheme came into being. A further consequence of the deteriorating financial position was that the Governors were persuaded under the pressures of the situation to appoint Consultants to explore these issues with joint funding from the TTA.

I now have to report to you that even whilst the Consultants have been at work, there has been a further deterioration in the College's position which can be clustered under two headings:

- (1) Actual loss of income
 - (2) Non-success of Bids to the Funding Bodies
3. Under (1) I need to inform you that, along with 50% of current providers, the College has been unsuccessful in its bid for the continuation of INSET funds. This means that a further £180,000 of funding will reduce to nil over 4 years. The block grant will reduce by 25% per year in favour of successful competition bidders, but rebidding only takes place every 3 years, save for a small annual bid possibility (£½m 1999, £1m 2000). There may be special grants to institutions like Westhill worst hit by this change of provision (NB a change of policy for TTA which has previously not been concerned with institutional viability). There appears also to be protection of some £14,000 of grant which is deemed to be HEFCE funded. The problem under this heading is not the immediate future but the situation in 4 years' time.
 4. Secondly under (1), our MASN for 1998 on actual calculation came out at 838 not 858, as projected which, on an average of core funding and fees, we calculate as a further loss of c £80,000 per annum (but see attached submission to HEFCE on this).
 5. On the bidding front we were unsuccessful in our bid to TTA for the Professional Development of Head Teachers and we now believe our submission to HEFCE for funding under Circular 20/97 is not to be funded.
 6. What we vitally need to know here is whether we are writing the wrong kind of documents or whether the College is locked into a situation where it cannot move forward because judgements are constantly being made on the basis of past track-run, a history that the present management is powerless to change.
 7. The outcome of these financial changes I would summarise as the need for the College to enhance its income not by c £300,000 recurrent as at the beginning of the academic session but by c £550,000 recurrent with 2 bid opportunities lost.
 8. Expressed another way I believe that such a quantity represents too large a gap to be bridged in the years available by development of the Centre for Lifelong Learning, though it is important to understand that I still place critical strategic importance of that development for the College's future whatever form that may take.

9. All this is the more disappointing in that negotiations with the University which consumed a lot of initial energy have now been successfully completed, giving the College very much of the freedom it has been seeking (eg ref Part-time Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees, Modular Masters' Degrees, APEL agreement and BPhil. MA in Applied Dance in Education and the Community).
10. As the financial gap has opened up beyond our capacity to bridge, so the management has had to work even more urgently at new alliances both with the University of Birmingham and potentially with new partners.
11. One institution has made a proposal to us, we ourselves have opened conversations with a second, and our Consultants have made an entry with a third, whilst a fourth may also emerge possibly in combination with one of the other partners.
12. This is a time consuming enterprise and raises questions to which the answers are few because of a lack of precedents within the system. Key questions include:
 - What models for alliance are available in the system, short of mergers, which protect in some measure the autonomy of the smaller institution?

(Existing answers seem to be Charlotte Mason/La Sainte Union, neither of which we judge helpful)
 - How would any change impact upon the role of Trustees?

(Might they need to change their objectives, by adding an additional clause embracing the new partnership (with Charity Commission permission) or enter into some covenant to make available College facilities to a new body)
 - Is there any merit in exploring a holding company/ trading company model of relating to the parent institution?
 - What presence would the new institution require on the Governing Body/Academic Board?
 - What would the attitude of the Funding Bodies be to such arrangements? Who would they fund? Are they desirous of eliminating smaller colleges and therefore prepared to use their good offices to enable this to happen?
 - Would a joint bid for MASN from two institutions working jointly together be more powerful than our previous supplications?
13. Clearly the College needs to develop as strong a negotiating position as possible. This has to be done with great care. For example, the knowledge that several partners are showing interest is not without significance. We are currently in a position of drawing up a Westhill Asset List, actual and potential, to aid this process.

MEMO

TO: Prof J.H. Briggs
John Walmsley
Ann Lance
Bud Winteridge
Roger Woods

DATE: 26 January 1998

FROM: David Davies

Subject: Business Plan for HEFCE & TTA (with projected financial savings of £300K p.a.?) and JW's memo of 20.1.98

- I. In my view it will not be possible to state how we will "balance the books" by the end of February 1998. We shall have no definitive evidence by then of:
 - HEFCE MASN re-calculations
 - HEFCE widening provision bid from the college
 - Israel programme financial realities (as opposed to speculations)
 - the Lifelong Learning Centre's specific activities
 - any strategic alliances which may yield benefits to the college
2. I have stated on several occasions that speculative scenarios are one thing, but meaningful activity schedules and estimates of income, if they are to be real, are quite another. For example:
 - we have not yet appointed to the CLL
 - a meaningful business plan for the CLL must take account of the staff's experience and capacities, yet they have not yet been appointed
 - joint federal activities are a drain on academic resources, not an addition to them
 - we do not have "new business arrangements" yet, rather we have good ideas and proposals which are developing towards business plans (eg, CPD and part-time provision)
3. Robson Rhodes have not produced a College Business Plan but rather a list of areas and topics which we could have done for ourselves (at considerably less cost).
4. The financial projections, if based on our discussions with Robson Rhodes cannot be rooted in reality and experience. As we stand at present, I do not feel able to subscribe to a projection which puts some £300,000 into the bottom line in 1998-99.

5. I feel our Governors are not fully aware of the precariousness of our financial future and have been "oversold" on the remedial actions we have taken so far. If our salvation is to be Israel and the CLL, we shall, in my personal view, need to invest a great deal more than we have.
6. On the question of alliances (and the Robson Rhodes matrix), we have identified no prospect that would ensure survival and increase our numbers within the time scale set by this business plan. It is not possible to state that any partner acceptable to Governors currently has been found who will materially influence our deficit to our benefit.

I am sure that we can produce a document which may satisfy or convince Robson Rhodes and HEFCE/TTA that we have a plan. I cannot convince myself that we have or are likely to secure the £1.0-£1.5 million turnover needed to put £300,000 net into our budget on a recurrent annual basis. I am committed to making a success of what we have begun, but I would like an open and frank discussion with senior colleagues on this situation.

MEMO

TO: John Briggs
John Walmsley

DATE: 9 February 1998

FROM: David Davies

Re: Financial projections for College Business Plan

I think the following targets are ambitious but reasonably realistic. They are based, however, on a set of assumptions, which cannot be tested in time to meet the TTA and HEFCE deadlines. Nevertheless, I have been persuaded that the College's interests are best served by agreeing to make projections at this stage.

Centre for Lifelong Learning (CLL)

Activity Centres

- Part-time Certificate, Diploma and Degree Programme (Learning for Life)
- Work-based Learning Programme (WBL)
- Israel Programme
- University for Industry/Credit Mapping (UFI/CM)
- Islamic Learning (IL)
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD) INSET and Religious Education (RE)
- FE and Community Liaison (FE/CL)

Forecast Financial Summary - CLL

Activity Centre	1998/99 Income	1999/2000 income	% return to balance	Surplus/(Deficit) 1998/99	Surplus/(Deficit) 1999/2000
Part-time Programmes	-	-	-	-	-
'Learning for Life' (HEFCE) *①	200,000 *①	200,000 *①	20%	40,000 *①	40,000 *①
Work-based Learning (WBL) *②	36,000 *②	54,000 *②	40%	14,400 *②	21,600 *②
Israel	(8,000)	110,000	50%	-	51,000
University for Industry and Credit Mapping	2,000	8,000	40%	800	3,200
Islamic Learning	-	-	-	-	-
CPD - INSET/RE *③	10,000	20,000	20%	2,000	4,000
FE & Community Liaison	5,000	15,000	25%	1,250	3,750
Total	245,000	407,000	-	58,450	123,550

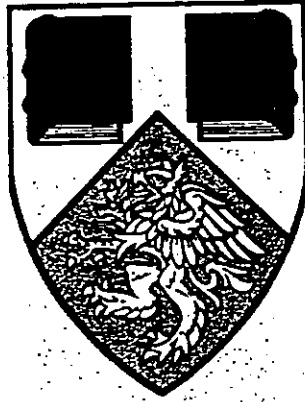
NOTES

- *① Subject to HEFCE allocation. Assumes 100 FTE x £2,000 per unit.
- *② Assumes in year 1 (1998/99) that 4 cohorts x 30 students x 30 credits x £10 per credit = £36,000 and in year 2 (1999/2000) that 6 cohorts x 30 students x 30 credits x £10 per credit = £54,000
- *③ Assumes additional CPD/RE income to historic programme

CONCLUSIONS

- The targeted income and forecast surpluses will not remove the forecast deficit at the year 2000 of £357,000
- The most optimistic target rests on several sets of unproven assumptions, which include HEFCE allocations of part-time MASN at 100 FTES at £2,000 per FTE and Israel income of £110,000 in 1999, neither of which is secured.
- The recovery plan is not sufficient to balance the recurrent budget.
- A stronger position on a partnership which will bring income is needed.
- We need to re-assess our decision not to address costs.

Appendix 2



Westhill College
of Higher Education

Centre for Lifelong Learning: A Prospectus

WESTHILL COLLEGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Centre for Lifelong Learning: A Prospectus

1. Introduction

For maximum impact on learning opportunities there is a need to extend existing and emerging provision to people, where and when they require it. Everyone, in the workplace, the home, in local communities and centres should have lifelong access to a range of supported learning activities at the levels they need.

Westhill College has established a Centre for lifelong learning in order to ensure that as a provider of education, training and professional development it is at the forefront of educational developments in the year 2000 and beyond. Professional and academic knowledge demands a dynamic curriculum which cannot be restricted to the academy or campus alone. The Centre will encourage the growth of learning opportunities wherever they occur and will seek to generate new knowledge in partnership with learners in a variety of sites of learning. Such new knowledge will, it is anticipated, require new forms and methods of accreditation and this focus will be supported by the work of the Centre.

2. Key Activities of the Centre for Lifelong Learning

The key activities of the Centre will cohere around the Westhill College mission, in particular that of facilitating access to learning for previously excluded individuals or groups. The Centre will be concerned with extending these learning and accreditation opportunities previously delivered on the College's Selly Oak campus to potential students in learning communities, including those of the workplace, which are far beyond the physical bounds of the college. The core activities will include promoting and marketing learning, brokering learning opportunities, providing information and guidance, commissioning educational development, accrediting and assuring the quality of course provision with which the College is associated and developing the educational principles of personal, professional and workplace learning. The Centre will devise and deliver a range of innovative programmes which are relevant to the vision of lifelong learning.

3. Core Functions:

* Promotion and Marketing of Learning Opportunities

- Profile the needs, lifestyles and expectations of key client groups.

- Exploit the strengths and traditions of the public provision promoted by the College.
- Connect the curriculum expertise of the College with that of industry and commerce, locally, regionally and where appropriate nationally.
- Target key target groups and learners.
- Establish a high profile and brand for Westhill's professional and workplace learning schemes.

* **Brokerage**

- Provide and market learning opportunities to individuals and companies.
- Target particular groups in order to meet priorities.
- Establish direct relationships with learners and centres of the 'University for Industry' and the 'National Learning Grid'.
- Adapt and reshape existing programmes of education to meet new needs.
- Give advice, guidance and support to all potential lifelong learners.

* **Commissioning**

- Develop flagship programmes of relevant, accessible and high quality provision capable of generating and sustaining fee income.
- Stimulate new partnerships across the public and private sectors of employment.
- Support and develop solutions to learning access which utilise the new communication technologies.
- Encourage and build networks so that 'communities of interest' are able to benefit from and contribute to the development of the College.
- Commission research relevant to the work of the Centre.

* **Market Analysis and Strategic Planning**

- Identify critical economic, social and educational trends which will impact upon the College's provision and programmes for lifelong learning.

- Anticipate future knowledge and skill needs to which the College can respond.
- Analyse research and act as a source for information gathering and intelligence.
- Act as a 'market-maker' helping to create demands for Westhill's educational resources and opportunities amongst a variety of public and learning communities.

4. Initial Programmes

The Centre will take responsibility for the following teaching and learning programmes and activities from 1998 onwards:

- * **'Learning for Life'** - a part-time modular awards programme based upon the Combined Studies Awards Scheme approved by the University of Birmingham and involving the HEFCE widening access proposals
- * **Work-based learning** - a programme of personal and professional development for industry-based learners
- * **Israeli B.Phil and Masters Degree Distance Learning Programmes**
- * **Westhill's University for Industry** pilot programme (in association with JMC and Oxford Brooks University)
- * **Credit mapping and credit rating** industry-based training courses through APEL
- * **Islamic Learning Communities Project** which will promote partnerships for education and community development (including where appropriate business interests and training)

5. Staffing

The initial staffing complement will be:

Director of the Centre

Programme Manager(s)

Islamic Learning Co-ordinator

Centre Administrator/Secretary

CENTRE MEMBERSHIP

Fellows

Professor Richard Teare
Oxford Brooks University

Professor Richard Dealtry
International Management Centre, Buckingham

Dr Gaje Davidson Burnett
Director of Research and Statistics, Universities Council for the Admission of
Students (UCAS)

Reverend Dr Stephen Sizer
Vicar, Virginia Water, Surrey

WESTHILL COLLEGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Centre for Lifelong Learning

Director of the Centre for Lifelong Learning

Post Specification

The Director post will carry responsibility for the academic and business activities of the Centre. S/he will be expected to demonstrate a track record in the development, management and delivery of innovative education and/or training programmes in either or both the private and public sectors. No specific academic or professional specialism is required for this post, however, an awareness of a range of innovative educational and training issues and themes will be an initial requirement.

The post will be at a senior level within the College and the successful candidate will be expected to contribute towards and receive the full benefits of college membership. The Centre will comprise a third strand of academic and professional activity alongside the Schools of Arts and Humanities and Professional Studies. The Director will be accountable to the Principal and Deputy Principal of the College and will work closely with the three College Deans and the College Business Manager.

The Centre for Lifelong Learning is essentially an enterprise unit within the College and is expected to utilise the existing resources of the College in addition to its own, to achieve its objectives and targets. The Director is expected to be entrepreneurial in the approach and methods used to generate activity, resources and income for the College. A range of initiatives is underway and will become the direct responsibility on a day-to-day basis of the Centre. The Director is expected to develop new initiatives in order to deliver strategic change for the College within measurable time periods and to plan and manage budgets in accordance with business strategy.

Qualifications, skills and experience required:

- Degree or equivalent educational and professional qualifications; a postgraduate degree or equivalent professional status will be an advantage but is not a requirement of the post
- A demonstrable record of achievement in education or a related field from industry and commerce
- Willingness to innovate and contribute to the fields of education, training, professional development and work-based learning
- Ability to strategically plan, manage and expand programmes of learning
- Experience in the management of staff and resources
- Credibility and professional leadership in the field of 'lifelong learning'

Director of the Centre for Lifelong Learning (continued)

- IT literacy up to PC user level for communication purposes
- Familiarity with systems of work-based learning; open learning and professional continuing development (CPD)
- Entrepreneurial skills with recognition of the social purposes of public sector Higher Education

Person Specification

- Aptitude for developing and sharing a vision of lifelong learning
 - Adaptability and flexibility
 - High level of motivation to succeed
 - Ability to communicate effectively, orally and in writing
 - Willingness to work a non-traditional timetable.
 - Capacity to motivate and enthuse others
 - Excellent interpersonal skills
 - Ability to work with minimal supervision to achieve targets within deadlines
-

Salary range: £25,359-32,781 p.a.

Conditions of Employment

The Director of the Centre for Lifelong Learning is an academic member of staff. In order to meet the requirements of this new initiative, the postholder is expected to adapt a flexible working pattern.

The Director is entitled to 35 working days annual holiday in addition to statutory holidays.

This appointment is for a fixed-term period of two years in the first instance.

WESTHILL COLLEGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Centre for Lifelong Learning

Programme Manager

Qualifications, Skills and Experience Required

- Degree or equivalent educational and/or professional qualification
- Knowledge and experience of work within the field of education or curriculum development, or equivalent expertise acquired in business, industry or public service
- IT literacy or the aptitude to acquire and apply it quickly
- Experience of devising and implementing organisational systems
- Knowledge of industry-based training and qualifications
- Ability and willingness to develop and adapt ideas in practical settings
- Knowledge and/or experience of Higher Education and/or Further Education and/or Adult and Continuing Education would be an advantage

Post Specification

The person selected will have complementary abilities and tasks to that of the Director of the Centre for lifelong learning and will:

- Support the Director in devising and implementing the business plan of the Centre
- Manage the various programmes of the Centre in conjunction with Westhill staff and other members of the Centre who may be within industry or public service
- Work closely with the Deans and staff of the two academic schools to deliver programmes
- Develop new programmes and help implement the strategic plan of the Centre
- Teach on courses and programmes as appropriate and/or contribute to course and curriculum development across the Centre and College.
- Devise, develop and disseminate learning materials, including those needed for student support and guidance
- Contribute to the development of a culture of lifelong learning and its practical implementation through the Centre

Programme Manager (continued)

Person Specification

- Ability to manage teaching and learning programmes
 - Adaptability and responsiveness to fast changing environments
 - Excellent communication skills
 - Interpersonal skills of a high order
 - Capacity to work unsupervised
 - Willingness to accept responsibility
 - Able to set own targets and evaluate performance
 - Team membership skills and competence
 - Written and oral skills to a high degree of competence
-

Salary range: £15,411-£20,041 p.a.

Conditions of Employment

The Programme Manager of the Centre for Lifelong Learning is an academic member of staff. In order to meet the requirements of this new initiative, the postholder is expected to adapt a flexible working pattern.

The Programme Manager is entitled to 35 working days annual holiday in addition to statutory holidays.

This appointment is for a fixed-term period of two years in the first instance.

WESTHILL COLLEGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Centre for Lifelong Learning

Islamic Learning Co-ordinator

Qualifications, skills and experience required

- Degree or equivalent educational or professional qualification; a higher degree will be an advantage but is not a requirement of the post.
- An understanding of the contexts of 'lifelong learning', especially in relation to the educational and training needs of Muslim communities and individuals.
- A demonstrable record of achievement in education and/or related fields covered within the Islamic faith community.
- Willingness to innovate and contribute to the fields of education, training and professional development for Muslim communities.
- Experience in the production of learning materials, including guidance and support for students from Muslim communities.
- Entrepreneurial skills necessary for the development of partnerships between Muslim communities in need of access to education and training and the Centre for Lifelong Learning.
- Ability to develop income bearing programmes and funded schemes.
- Familiarity with innovative methods of curriculum development and delivery suitable for Muslim learners at all appropriate ages and stages of their learning careers.

Person Specification

- Ability to liaise between the Centre, Westhill College and Muslim learners at local, regional and, where appropriate, national level.
- Excellent communication and language skills.
- Highly developed and applied interpersonal skills necessary for the tasks set for the post.
- Willingness to perform as a team member, both within the Centre and the wider College.
- Aptitude for self-starting in the generation of programmes, courses and fundable ventures.

Islamic Learning Co-ordinator (continued)

- Understanding and sympathy with the economic and cultural features of Muslim communities.
 - Understanding and sympathy with the wider mission of Westhill College to serve a range of ethnic and faith communities.
-

Salary range: £13,871-£20,041 p.a.

Conditions of Employment

The Islamic Learning Co-ordinator of the Centre for Lifelong Learning is an academic member of staff. In order to meet the requirements of this new initiative, the postholder is expected to adapt a flexible working pattern.

The Islamic Learning Co-ordinator is entitled to 35 working days annual holiday pro rata in addition to any statutory holidays which fall within the period of employment.

This appointment is for a fixed-term period of two years in the first instance.

WESTHILL COLLEGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Centre for Lifelong Learning

Administrator/Secretary (Part-time)

Post Specification: Qualifications and skills

- An academic qualification or its equivalent professional qualification or status.
- A demonstrable record of recent achievement in the fields of administrative support, including managing record systems.
- Provision of full administrative services for the Centre for Lifelong Learning.
- Supervision of office systems, communication and records of planning and strategic developments for the Centre.
- Produce reports on all appropriate matters.
- Manage databases and computer-based records for the Centre.
- Provision of secretarial support and secretarial services to staff of the Centre.
- A high degree of competence in IT and wordprocessing skills
- Proven secretarial and administrative expertise

Person specification

- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills
- Ability to work with minimum supervision and to complete tasks on time
- A proactive and business-like approach
- Accuracy and attention to detail
- An understanding and commitment to the aims and objectives of the Centre

Administrator/Secretary (continued)

Salary range: £11,208-£12,026 p.a. pro rata

Conditions of Employment

The Administrator/Secretary is a part-time member of the resources staff team.

Hours of work: 30 hours per week

Annual holiday entitlement: 20 working days pro rata plus any public holidays which fall within the Administrator/Secretary's normal working week

Pension: A contributory pension scheme is provided by the Selly Oak Colleges

This appointment is for a fixed-term period of two years in the first instance.

WESTHILL COLLEGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

CENTRE FOR LIFELONG LEARNING (CLL)

AN ACTIVITY AND BUSINESS PLAN FOR WORK WITH COMPANIES

We believe new information and communication technology allied to **action learning** has the power to open up communication and collaboration channels to such an extent that if sufficient imagination and flair is applied, the revolution in learning it inspires will have the potential to bring about the learning society. Indeed, this power is the only significant new factor which could allow the possibility of a rapid breakthrough.

Our objectives for 1998 are as follows:

- take up of Westhill accreditation services by 6 large companies
- take up of management development and learning by 40 small companies
- take up of management education and learning by 100 individuals
- establishment of a brokerage service offering information, help and guidance based on ICT
- testing the provision of management education and learning materials in an IT format
- supporting learning and stimulating demand by promoting the use of local learning centres starting initially with the OLRC at Selly Oak.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

Any pilot seeking to increase the market for learning will have to consider both the demand and supply side of the market, and look at brokerage between the two. It will also on another axis have to look at issues which are barriers to the take up of learning - issues to do with the capability of organisations and individuals to learn, access to learning and motivation to learn.

Learning Infrastructure

Barriers to Learning	Capability Access Motivation	Supply Side	Brokerage	Demand Side

On the supply side of learning, there is an increasing amount on offer in terms of capability, access and desire for organisations to offer training. What is lacking to maximise the impact of the learning infrastructure is informed demand from individuals and businesses, especially with regard to motivation for learning.

LIFELONG LEARNING

In order to compete in the rapidly changing job market and remain employable, individuals will need to ensure their skills are kept up to date. We have chosen to operate a model in relation to management development but the outcomes will be applicable to all levels of learning.

Brokerage cannot stand alone. The dynamics of learning are such that the brokerage function will also need to act as a catalyst for change in the supply side and demand side. There must at least be some drawing in of supply and demand factors.

Proposed objectives address the following supply side factors:

- S1. Supply accreditation possibilities for in-company and work-related learning.
- S2. Supply management education materials and development of IT versions of training materials (but these will not be the only materials/services whose details are made available to clients).
- S3. Tutor support via E Mail.
- S4. Partnership suppliers who can supply ICT access skills.

A pilot scheme will stimulate the demand for learning by:

- D1. Breaking down barriers to learning by making brokerage and learning available at convenient times for companies and individuals.
- D2. Providing learning and brokerage in places convenient to individuals and companies - in the workplace, at home and in local learning centres.
- D3. Providing access to ICT equipment at the OLRC.
- D4. Introducing an element of fun into learning.

Work with small employers suggests that a barrier to take up of management development and education is the absence of time for key staff to undertake a course of study. Where the owner managers themselves are the potential learners, the problem is even more severe. This pilot will explore whether getting to people through a company initiative, but providing flexible access to learning outside of work, will overcome these barriers.

DETAILS OF WORK TO BE UNDERTAKEN/METHODOLOGY

Our methodology will involve provoking demand from small companies and individuals via our marketing campaign. The campaign will emphasise the unique nature of the support and delivery we will offer, designed to overcome the barriers to learning and to increase the propensity to take up learning. Whether individuals learn in the workplace as part of an employer based initiative, outside the workplace (with or without employer support) we will offer innovative means of supporting and delivering learning.

Client Group

Our target client groups will be:

- a) Small companies who are committed to training, eg, IIP committed companies, and companies who have graduated from TEC provided programmes.
- b) Small companies who are committed to the use of ICT but who have not taken up management education and development.
- c) Individuals who are taking up management education and development as part of an initiative by their employer, with learning possibilities in and out of the workplace.
- d) Individuals taking up management development and education outside of an initiative by their employer.

Work to be undertaken based on BROKERAGE

- B1. Establishment of a database of local and regional management education and development opportunities.
- B2. Providing a choice making tool that will allow companies and individuals to assess what provision would be best for them.

B3. Providing IT based individual learning planners, readily accessible and free to users

- we will make available via the local learning centres, a Personal Development Planner produced by Westhill College. The Planner will allow individuals to log their learning objectives and goals, to reflect on what has been learned and plan next steps. It is a formative toolkit and is a development of a successful project introduced to businesses in Surrey
- individuals will be able to draw the Planner down from our intranet for free. Use of the Planner will help people plan their learning more effectively, get more from learning and recognise distance travelled.

B4. Providing a local learning centre or centres where brokerage services can be accessed and where learning can subsequently take place and be supported

- a centre(s) could be open in time for this pilot and will be designated as a local learning centre
- in this pilot the local learning centre(s) will allow access to IT equipment and access to the internet. Each centre will need staff trained to help clients in the use of IT. The centres will act as local study centre(s) where people can find out what management development is available to them, study IT and paper based learning materials
- the local learning centre(s) could be used by people exploring options, by those who have already made a decision on a learning path, by those whose learning began in the workplace but who are subsequently learning outside working hours, or by people accessing tutor support.

B5. Access will be backed up by people on line via PC's on the telephone through a helpline, and in person through guidance at CLL

- no matter how easily accessible and user friendly the IT systems, there will be a need for people support.

B6. Management development needs analysis provided to small companies

- for many small companies access to information will only be the start of a process. They will need professional help to assess the needs of their staff and to determine which route of management development and education is most appropriate. This service will be provided by one of our accredited associate consultants. We will use an existing paper based diagnostic tool.

The **SUPPLY** work undertaken is as follows:

- S1. Supply of management education materials and development of training materials
- an essential element of making the breakthrough will be having materials available in a format that can be studied by the learner at times, in places and at a pace to suit them
 - provision of accreditation for in-company programmes and for personal and professional development (PPD).
- S2. Tutor support via E Mail
- Westill College will provide tutor support by E Mail for companies and individuals using their own learning materials.
- S3. Partnership with suppliers who can supply access skills provision.

To properly test the brokerage function we will also need to test out some **DEMAND** stimulation as follows:

- D1. Breaking down barriers to learning and learning available at convenient times for companies and individuals
- help in making choices, planning learning and delivering learning materials at times convenient to the customer
 - our helpline will be open outside of office hours and on an experimental basis, at weekends
 - our local learning centre(s) will offer evening and weekend opening, allowing access to information, learning and support at times to suit the lives of learners.
- D2. Providing learning and brokerage in places convenient to companies and individuals - in the workplace, at home and in local learning centres
- the pilot intranet will be accessible from wherever there is a PC with an internet connection and, via the helpline, wherever there is a phone
 - learning can therefore take place in the workplace, home or elsewhere
 - our local learning centre(s) have a wide geographical coverage.
- D3. Introducing fun into learning.

STRATEGY FOR ATTRACTING CLIENTS

A full marketing strategy and plan will be developed. The messages will emphasise the uniqueness and novelty of the offer. We will capitalise on the marketing resources and skills of our partners.

The marketing strategy will target three different market segments.

i) Commitment to learning starts:

Small companies:

- we will target companies who have shown a previous or current commitment to training through involvement in existing partnerships or the provision of partners
- we will build a database of 'hot leads' and do a direct mail campaign
- promotion through the TEC and regional associations.

Individuals:

- advertisements and editorials in local press to promote the intranet and incentives for learning
- giving information on opportunities
- direct mailshot to graduates of training
- promotion through existing guidance centres
- marketing through professional associations.

ii) Existing use of ICT:

Small companies:

- promote management development training opportunities at Awareness Sessions
- promote through local partner/provider websites
- direct mail to companies that have attended training sessions, events or
- promotion through Business Link(s) and the TEC(s).

Individuals:

- use of local press as above
- promote in the open access centres, cyber-cafes etc
- promote through existing guidance providers.

iii) Those untouched by either learning or ICT:

Small companies:

- sales campaign linked to tightly targeted direct mail
- promotion through Business Link(s)
- promotion through trade associations and trade press.

Individuals:

- press and advertisements as above
- we will attract PR and media attention by emphasising the novel and fun aspects of the scheme
- through leaflet campaigns targeted at tight localities around the local learning centres.

TIMESCALE AND PROJECT MILESTONES

Establish & set up activity base	1st Week April 1998
Marketing campaign (1) commences	3rd Week April
Internet/Intranet site developed and live	End May
300 Learning opportunity records on database	End May
1st companies & individuals take up learning services	2nd Week June
Company visits by CLL business services commence	3rd Week June
Marketing campaign (2) commences	Mid July
10 Companies & 25 individuals taken up services	End July
600 records on database	End July
12 Companies & 30 individuals taken up services	End August
Interim evaluation of 1st 6 months of project	End August/September
Records on database	End August/September
Marketing campaign (3) commences	1st Week October

Records on database	End November
26 Companies & 65 individuals taken up services	End November
Records on database	End December
45 Companies & 116 individuals taken up services	End January 1999
Evaluation & feedback	3rd Week March 1999
COSTS - attached at Annex 1	

OUTCOMES AND MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Outcomes

- learning opportunity records on database
- 6 large companies
- 40 small and medium sized companies involved
- 100 individuals involved

Annex 1

<u>Breakdown of Expenditure</u>		<u>Cost (October 97 - February 98)</u>
<u>Supply and Delivery</u>		
Quality framework		
Learning Materials Access Cost	£	
Map resources against standards	£	
<u>Brokerage Function</u>	£	
Information collection		
Internet database technical development	£	
Choice enablement tool	£	
<u>Demand, Learners and Access</u>	£	
Marketing campaign		
Email tutor support	£	
	£	
Industry Development Fund Contribution	£	
Contribution towards Administration and Management Costs (inc. below)		
Expenditure	£	
Sub-total Private Leverage	£	
Expenditure (cash or in kind) from Other Sources		
	£	
Sub-total Other	£	
Grand Total	£	

Annex 2

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS, THEIR ROLES AND FACILITIES OFFERED:

Orchard Learning Centre, Selly Oak

Oxford Brookes - University for Industry

Transart Plc - Cambs

Westhill Enterprises Ltd

AZTEC - West London Training and Enterprise Council

The Marriott Virtual University

cllbp.doc

Westhill Consultants

(Training & Development)

Our Opportunity

This is your opportunity to become a member of Westhill Consultants which will give you access to Higher Education credits for your training courses, giving your courses added value and your students access to a Higher Education Degree from the University of Birmingham. As a member of this organisation you would have access to other trainers who would complement your work, together with the resources and various services offered by Westhill College.

Membership Benefits

- Commission structure for referrals of business
- Various Westhill College resources
- Networking opportunities
- Opportunities for personal development

Scheme Benefits

- Higher education credits from the University of Birmingham
- Coherence of training portfolio
- Training referrals

Higher Education Credits

Westhill Consultants provides a *qualifications framework* for the training and development work conducted within companies, whether that training is delivered by independent trainers or by organisations. Existing training and learning activities can be mapped against undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications, thus adding value for the client organisation.

New training opportunities can be identified and programmes of learning activity designed to fulfil the qualification criteria from the outset. Where activity is competence based, then our qualifications will articulate with NVQ's and SVQ's at higher levels.

Westhill Consultants will also continue to act as a traditional brokerage, being in a position to recommend appropriate trainers and consultants for any type of organisation in a specific location.



Centre for Lifelong Learning

The Centre for Lifelong Learning works with companies, community and charitable organisations to provide a dynamic curriculum of work based learning and experiential learning, which can then be used to gain credits towards a certificate, diploma or degree from the University of Birmingham. This work is carried out across a diverse range of organisations, including international corporations.



Westhill College of Higher Education
Weoley Park Road, Selly Oak,
Birmingham B29 6LL
Tel: 0121 472 7245 or 0121 415 2404
Fax: 0121 415 2406
Email: cll@westhill.ac.uk
Website: <http://www.westhill.ac.uk>

Centre for
LIFELONG
LEARNING



Westhill College of Higher Education

*Part-time
Prospectus
1998-99*

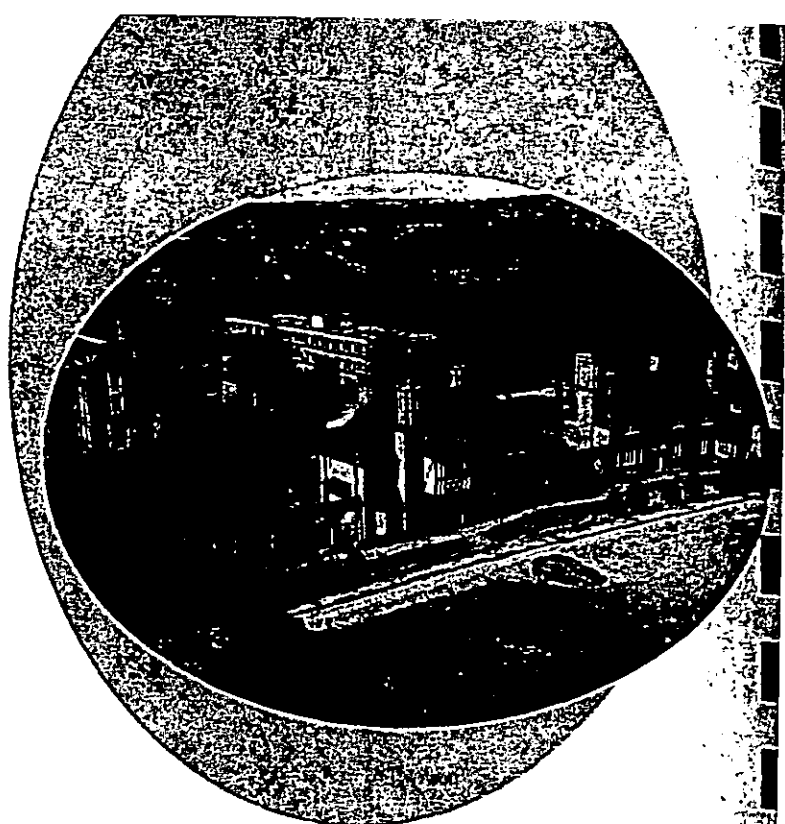


*A University Sector College
affiliated to and accredited by
The University of Birmingham*

Westhill The College

Westhill is a university sector college fully accredited by the University of Birmingham. The College is organised into two Schools: the School of Arts and Humanities and the School of Professional Studies. In addition the College has a Centre for Lifelong Learning which delivers a range of programmes on campus as well as in community and work based settings. All undergraduate and postgraduate programmes lead to certificates, diplomas and degrees of the University of Birmingham.

Westhill was founded in 1907 and it is a founder member, and the largest, of the Colleges of the Selly Oak Federation. The 82 acre Selly Oak campus is located less than four miles from Birmingham city centre. Campus facilities include an indoor heated swimming pool, tennis courts, gymnasium, Health Centre, Nursery, Chapel, and Muslim Prayer Room. The College is easily accessible by road and rail from the whole of the West Midlands region and surrounding counties.



The normal college timetable runs from 9am to 9pm. However, we are continually striving to extend learning opportunities by operating a more flexible timetable and offering alternative modes of study. This allows for the delivery of some short courses, and programmes outside of normal college hours and by alternative methods such as distance learning.

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A Flexible Programme For Life Long Learning

As part of its commitment to lifelong learning Westhill is continually expanding its learning opportunities and now offers a range of programmes to meet the diverse needs of part-time learners.

We recognise that at many different stages in their lives and for many different reasons people choose to begin, or to continue, a programme of higher education. You may be one of those people. You may be working full-time or part-time and would like to improve your academic or professional qualifications for your career; you may be looking to change direction in your career and require new or additional learning and qualifications; you may be unemployed and wishing to improve your career prospects by gaining additional qualifications or you may, like an ever increasing number of learners, simply wish to delve into a subject or subjects that you have never had the opportunity to explore before.

Whatever your motivations, and whether you want to study just single independent modules or short courses for personal interest or professional development, or whether you want to work towards an undergraduate Honours degree or Masters degree, we recognise that you will probably need a flexible framework that will allow you to study at your own pace and to construct the programme of study most suited to your needs and interests.

Our part-time programme allows you to do just this by offering a range of modules in our Learning for Life programme which can be studied as stand alone short courses or which can be used to accumulate credit and work towards a Certificate, Diploma or Degree of the University of Birmingham through designated pathways.

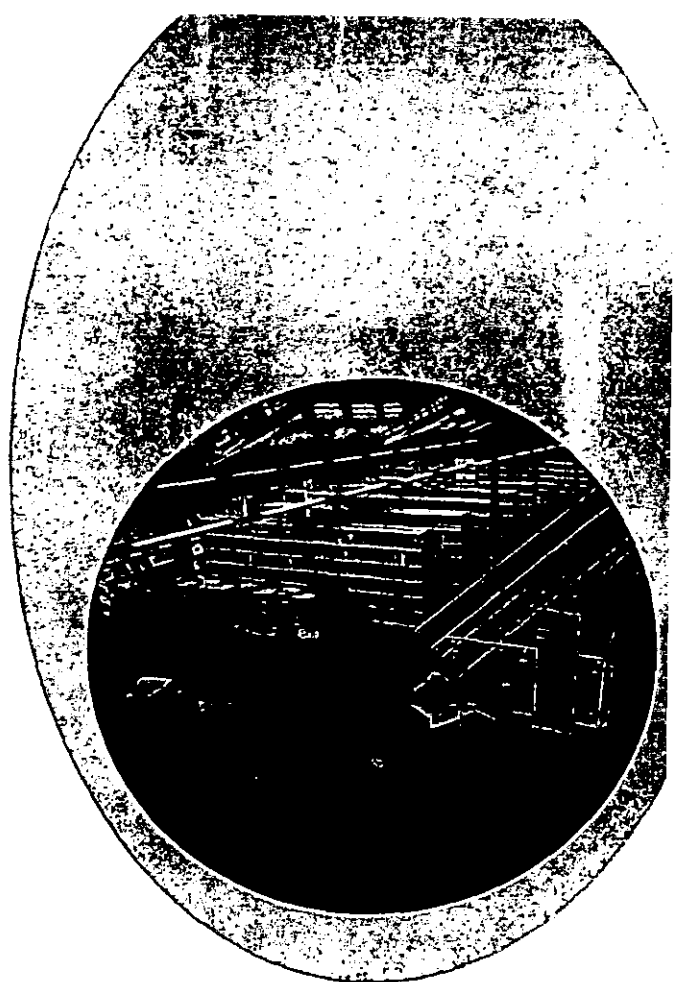


There are no special entry requirements for short courses in the Learning for Life programme but if you do decide that you would like to earn a higher award you will need to satisfy any prerequisites for that programme. You may find that, as well as credit gained from relevant short courses that you have taken, you can gain additional credit for any relevant prior experience and learning through the APEL scheme. This enables us to assess your prior learning and experience and, where appropriate, grant advanced standing in a programme. The APEL scheme is explained more fully on page 4 of this brochure.

Guidance

Before you enrol as a student with us you will have the opportunity to discuss your learning requirements with an academic adviser who will help you construct the programme most suited to your needs and interests.

Once you are registered as a student on a Certificate, Diploma or Degree programme you will be entitled to meet with an academic adviser at various points during your studies to review your module selections and ensure that you are working effectively towards your chosen personal academic goals.



Learning Resources

Important to your study will be the necessary back-up of up to date learning resources easily accessible to all.

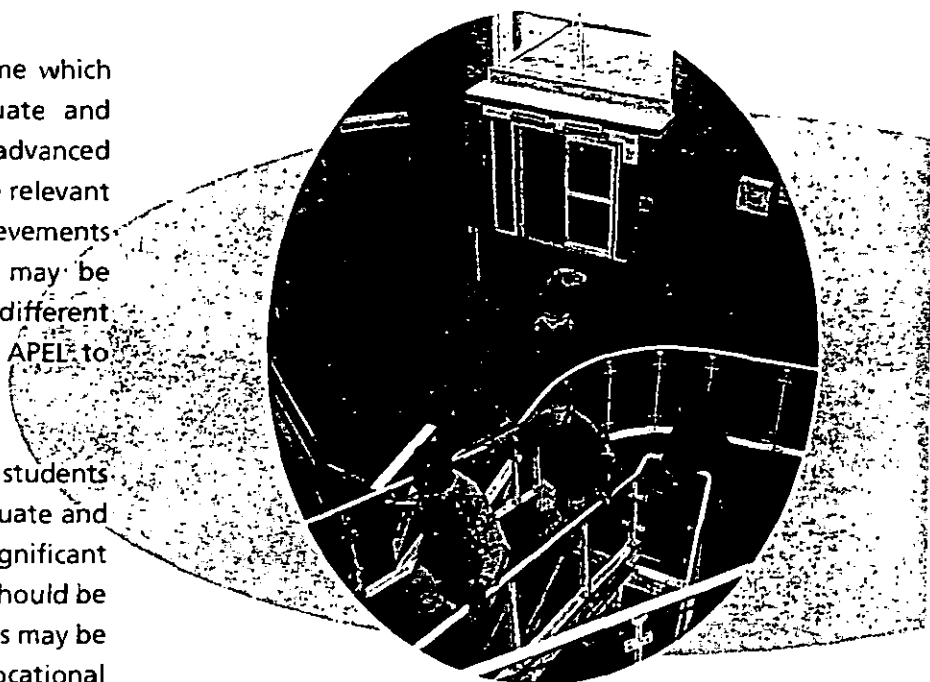
Our spacious new Learning Resources Centre, the Orchard Centre, which is accessible to wheelchair users, is an ideal place for private study and research and provides networked data, CD-ROMS, manuscripts, videos, books and periodicals, audio visual, library and media services. A wide area network links the Centre with all parts of the campus and students may access the local catalogue, their files and Internet on the personal computers which offer email facilities as well as Microsoft Office. Anyone wishing to consult books or periodicals not held in the Orchard Centre or in any other Birmingham library has the opportunity to request them from elsewhere via the inter-library loans service.

The Orchard Learning Resources Centre allows us to make full use of the latest technology for teaching and learning for both on campus and off campus delivery of modules, thereby increasing the flexibility of learning opportunities.

Accreditation of Prior Experience and Learning (APEL)

The College operates an APEL scheme which enables candidates for undergraduate and postgraduate awards to claim advanced standing. This means that if you have relevant prior experience and learning achievements these can be accredited and you may be entitled to enter the programme at different points beyond entry level by using APEL to gain advanced standing.

We recognise that many mature students beginning or returning to undergraduate and postgraduate study often have significant prior experience and learning which should be given recognition and accredited. This may be in the form of academic or vocational qualifications gained in another institution or may be related to experience and achievements in the workplace or other settings. The APEL scheme operated by the College enables you to demonstrate your achievements and, where appropriate, claim credit for up to two thirds of a modular undergraduate programme and one third of a modular masters programme.



This means that a student awarded the maximum amount of credit under the APEL scheme would need to complete further modules totalling 120 credits at the appropriate level.

For further details of the APEL scheme contact the Centre for Lifelong Learning

Degree	APEL Credit (max)	Module Credit	Total
BA/BSc	240	120	360
MA/MSc	60	120	180

Combined Studies Undergraduate Programme

The Combined Studies modular programme has been designed to provide students wishing to pursue studies up to BA or BSc Honours degree level the maximum flexibility and diversity to construct the programme most suited to their needs and interests.

The Combined Studies programme consists of free standing credit bearing modules. Single modules carry 10 credits. Some are offered as double modules and these are worth 20 credits. Modules are grouped into pathways and if you are working towards a degree you must follow a minimum of two and a maximum of three designated pathways.

A total of 360 credits are required for the degree but the programme is designed to enable you to accumulate credit through levels 1, 2 and 3 with exit points providing certification for credit achieved as set out in the table below.

Certificate

At level 1 students may select modules from the wide range of subject modules available and these need not be within a designated pathway. Students not continuing beyond level 1, but who have accumulated 60 or 120 credits, will be awarded a certificate as outlined in the table below.

Diploma

Students wishing to study beyond level 1 must follow modules within 2 or 3 designated pathways and accumulate a total of 120 credits at level 2. Students not continuing beyond level 2, but who have accumulated 120 credits, will be awarded a diploma as outlined in the table below.

Degree

Students studying for the degree must complete a further 120 credits at level 3.

Title	No of credits	Level
Combined Studies Certificate	60 - combination of subjects	CATS 1
Subject Certificate	60 - within a pathway	CATS 1
Certificate of HE	120 - combination of subjects	CATS 1
Subject Diploma	60 - within pathway(s)	CATS 2
Diploma of HE	240 - within pathways	CATS 2
BA / BSc Hons	360 - within pathways	CATS 3

Entry requirements

The undergraduate modular programme is designed to be an 'open scheme of study'. This means that, at level 1, you may enter the programme with no previous entry qualifications. In order to claim an award beyond level 1, however, you must satisfy the conditions for that award and this may require prerequisites according to the regulations for the award. Where appropriate, credit may be awarded through the APEL scheme for up to two thirds of an undergraduate programme.

Pathway combinations

Designated pathways may be combined in the following way:

Major	Minor	Joint	Minor	Minor	Minor
160	: 80	120 : 120	80	: 80	: 80
140	: 100				

Pathways

- Art
- Community Studies
- Counselling
- Creative Arts
- Dance
- Education
- English
- History
- Music
- Sport
- Theology

Modular Masters Programme

The modular programme has been designed to provide students wishing to pursue higher taught degrees to Masters level the maximum flexibility and diversity to construct the programme most suited to their needs and interests.

The modular programme offers designated pathways and each pathway comprises core (compulsory) and optional credit bearing modules. You may follow up to three pathways through the programme, one of which must constitute a major. Thus, there is the possibility to gain a multi-disciplinary award, or to concentrate on one specialist subject area. As well as taught modules, you will also complete a dissertation which provides the opportunity to conduct a detailed, in depth study in a particular area of interest within the chosen fields of study.

Single modules at M level carry 20 credits. Some modules may run for a whole year and be designated double modules: these are worth 40 credits. To obtain a Masters degree you must accumulate 180 credits at M level but the programme has been structured to allow earlier postgraduate award bearing exit points as shown in the table below:



Entry requirements

For entry to the Modular Masters programme you should normally hold a good Honours degree or equivalent qualification. Where appropriate, credit may be awarded through the APEL scheme for up to one third of a Masters programme.

Pathways

The following pathways are currently offered:

- Applied Community Studies
- Applied Theological Studies - Christian Studies
- Applied Theological Studies - Islamic Studies
- English Studies (Language & Literature)
- Training and Development

Title	No of Modules	Credit	Level
MA / MSc	6 + dissertation	180	M
Postgraduate Diploma	6	120	M
Postgraduate Certificate	3	60	M
BPhil	4 + dissertation	120	CATS 3
AGE	3	60	CATS 3
At Masters level the dissertation is worth 60 credits			
At BPhil level the dissertation is worth 40 credits			

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Education

We offer a range of courses that have been specially designed to support the professional development of teachers and allied professionals. If you hold a relevant professional qualification, the structure of the CPD programme enables you to study credit bearing modules and work towards an Advanced Certificate of Education (ACE), BPhil or Masters degree in designated pathways as outlined below. Although students normally register for an ACE, it is possible to register for just one module.



Title	No of Modules	Credit	Level
ACE	3	60	CATS 3
BPhil	4 + dissertation	120	CATS 3
Masters	6 + dissertation	180	M Level

Pathways

- Early Childhood Education
- English for Primary Teachers
- Information and Communication Technology in Primary Schools
- Mathematics at Key Stages 1 & 2
- Physical Education
- Religious Education
- School Improvement
- Special Educational Needs Co-ordination
- Subject Leadership and Co-ordination
- Updating Primary Skills * (Primary Teachers Returner Course)

* This is a refresher course for qualified primary teachers who have been out of the classroom for some time and wish to update their skills before returning to teaching.

For further details of CPD programmes:

Contact: The College Registry or
Chris Szwed, CPD Co-ordinator,
Tel: 0121 472 7245
Email: c.szwed@westhill.ac.uk

Other Part-time Courses

Undergraduate programmes

The College offers the following undergraduate full-time programmes leading to degrees of the University of Birmingham which can also be studied on a part-time basis:

BA (Hons) Humanities:

- Childhood Studies
- Creative Arts
- History: Islam & the Christian West
- Mathematics, Science and Psychology
- Race & Ethnic Studies
- Sport, Physical Education & Community Studies

BA (Hons) Applied Theological Studies:

- Christian
- Islamic

BPhil Community and Youth Studies

Dip HE Community, Play and Youth Studies

Post experience taught programmes

The College offers the following post-experience programmes on a part-time basis:

Certificate in Counselling

BPhil - Community and Youth Studies

Diploma - Community, Play and Youth Studies

BPhil / Diploma - Counselling

Diploma in Pastoral Studies

For further details of these programmes:

Contact: The College Registry

Tel: 0121 472 7245

Email: registry@westhill.ac.uk

Higher degrees by research

Under Westhill's close relationship with the University of Birmingham, there is an understanding that students pursuing research degrees of the University can be attached to Westhill and supervised by College staff. There are opportunities to study for the degrees of MPhil and PhD in the following academic areas:

- Art and Design/Drama/Dance
- Community Studies
- Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning
- Education
- English
- History
- Interdisciplinary Health Studies
- Interdisciplinary Studies
- Religious and Theological Studies

For further details of higher degrees by research:

Contact: The Research Office

Tel: 0121 472 7245



Learning for Life Programme

Studying for a formal award need not be your goal. There may be a short course offered within the Learning for Life programme which you would like to study because it is in a subject area that interests you and you want to find out more, or it may be something that you think will be useful to you in your career. You can enrol for one or more of the many short courses on offer and when you have successfully completed the course you will receive a transcript that details the credit value of the short course you have completed.

You may take as many short courses as you like but because they have a credit value, then at some stage you decide to work towards a higher award such as a University of Birmingham Certificate, which requires 60 credits, up to a Degree requiring 360 credits, you may use credit gained from short courses towards that award (see pages 5 and 6 for outline of undergraduate and postgraduate awards structure). Short courses can therefore, be used as 'tasters' which help you decide whether an area of study is for you or not. You may want to take several tasters before you decide whether you want to continue your studies in particular subject areas and as there are no special entry requirements for short courses, you do not need to worry if you have no prior subject relevant experience or qualifications.

The following short courses are available in the Learning for Life programme for 1998/99. Most short courses last for one semester (10 weeks or equivalent), or two semesters.

ART

- Drawing Media and Techniques - An Introduction
- Making Critical Judgements in Art

CREATIVE ARTS

- Dance in the Community
- Drawing Media and Techniques - An Introduction
- English Language Studies - An Introduction
- English Literature - An Introduction
- Jazz - An Introduction
- Making Critical Judgements in Art
- Making Dances
- Studying Drama - An Introduction
- Twentieth-Century American Classical Music - An Introduction
- What is Dance?

COMMUNITY STUDIES

- Action Research
- Community & Youth Work in Detached Context
- Dance in the Community
- Equal Opportunities
- Foundations of Counselling
- Introduction to World Religions: Islam and Hinduism
- Nineteenth-Century Social History
- Professional and Ethical Issues
- Skills of Counselling I
- Skills of Counselling II
- The Century of Nationalism
- The Individual and Society
- Women Returning to Work

COUNSELLING

- Equal Opportunities
- Foundations of Counselling
- Professional and Ethical Issues
- Skills of Counselling I
- Skills of Counselling II

DANCE

- Dance in the Community
- Making Dances
- Studying Drama - An Introduction
- What is Dance?

EDUCATION

- Action Research
- Child Development
- Education for Citizenship
- English Language Studies - An Introduction
- Equal Opportunities
- Foundations of Counselling
- Nineteenth-Century Social History
- Professional and Ethical Issues
- Reading with Confidence
- Skills of Counselling I
- Skills of Counselling II
- Studying Drama - An Introduction
- The Century of Nationalism
- The Individual and Society
- Women Returning to Work

ENGLISH

- Action Research
- English Language Studies - An Introduction
- English Literature - An Introduction
- Reading with Confidence
- Studying Drama - An Introduction

HISTORY

- Nineteenth-Century Social History
- The Century of Nationalism

MUSIC

- Jazz - An Introduction
- Twentieth-Century American Classical Music - An Introduction

SPORT

- Contemporary Issues and Sport
- Equal Opportunities
- Sport Psychology - An Introduction
- The Body in Action

THEOLOGY

- Equal Opportunities
- Introduction to World Religions: Islam and Hinduism
- Religious Interests, Puzzles and Confusion
- Study Skills and Methodologies in the Study of Religion

GENERAL COURSES - Covering all Pathways

- Internet Searching and Resource Application - An Introduction
- Learning from Experience
- Women Returning to Education
- Word Processing and Spreadsheet Use - An Introduction

Short Courses 1998/99

The following short courses are offered. Most short courses last for one semester (10 weeks or equivalent) or two semesters (indicated * or **) and have a credit value as indicated. Courses will run on a Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday evening, 7.00-9.00 pm (indicated **M, T or W**), unless otherwise stated. Semesters begin in September and January.

Short courses may be studied independently or credit applied towards a Certificate, Diploma or Degree in the Combined Studies undergraduate programme. Relevant pathways are indicated.

Courses designated CATS 2/3 will be assessed at the appropriate level.

Although pathways are identified for each of these modules you can study a combination of modules worth up to 60 credits (leading to a certificate) before selecting specific pathways.

Title: Action Research

Level: CATS 3

Credit value: 10

Pathway: Community Studies, Education, English

Start date: September, January * T

This module will develop the understanding and skills necessary for carrying out small-scale research. The emphasis is on research for practical outcomes, particularly within the helping professions. Both quantitative and qualitative methods will be explored, as will issues relating to values, ethics, representativeness, reliability and validity. The intention is to develop a clear research strategy including both primary and secondary research methods.

Title: Child Development

Level: CATS 1

Credit value: 10

Pathway: Education

Start date: September, January * M

This module aims to enable students to develop an understanding of why children and young children behave in the ways they do. The nature/nurture argument is considered in some depth as are theories of development, particularly the behaviourist, naturalist and constructivist theories.

Title: Community and Youth Work in Detached Contexts

Level: CATS 3

Credit value: 10

Pathway: Community Studies

Start date: September, January * W

This module will enable students to consider the principles, practice and skills involved in working in a detached context. This includes the skills of information gathering, making contact, developing relationships, obtaining and using community-based resources, management and networking. Students will explore the political role of detached work and visit projects involved in this type of work.

Title: Contemporary Issues and Sport

Level: CATS 1

Credit value: 10

Pathway: Sport

Start date: September, January * M

This module introduces students to the sociology of sport from an issues based perspective. Areas will include selected topics such as: drug abuse and sport, children in intensive sport, equal opportunities debates including gender and 'race', violence and sport and the significance of the social body in shaping sports participation. To increase understanding of these issues students will be introduced to selected sociological theories as appropriate.

Title: Dance in the Community

Level: CATS 2 / 3

Credit value: 10

Pathway: Community Studies, Creative Arts, Dance

Start date: September, January * W

Students will be involved in an examination of the concept of community and the nature of community projects for workers and clients. They will explore the diverse meanings of dance in the community and the skills required in this area. Students will be introduced to research methods appropriate for investigating community dance and will have the opportunity to undertake a case study within their locality.

Title: Drawing Media and Techniques - An Introduction

Level: CATS 1

Credit value: 10

Pathway: Art, Creative Arts

Start date: September, January * M

This module will involve studio based practical work which introduces students to a selected range of drawing media and techniques. The course focuses on the visual language of line, tone, colour, texture, shape and composition and is based on the examination of both natural and man-made objects.

Title: Education for Citizenship**Level:** CATS 2 / 3**Credit value:** 10**Pathway:** Education**Start date:** September, January * T

This module aims to increase students' awareness of citizenship and in particular examines ways in which education for citizenship can be achieved. This current contemporary issue provides a background for considering how schools can encourage active citizenship and can evaluate their success. Strategies for dealing with controversial issues are explored and schemes to assist this process are examined.

Title: English Language Studies - An Introduction**Level:** CATS 1**Credit value:** 10**Pathway:** Creative Arts, Education, English**Start date:** September, January * W

Students will understand what is involved in language study. They will acquire appropriate terminology (i.e. metalanguage) to make the best use of their descriptive abilities and develop confidence in addressing key language issues. They will appreciate attitudes to language use and language variety and also study a brief history of English. Accents and dialects and notions of correctness will be covered. Differences between speech and writing and patterns of spelling will also feature.

Title: English Literature - An Introduction**Level:** CATS 1**Credit value:** 10**Pathway:** Creative Arts, English**Start date:** September, January * M

Students will develop their knowledge of practical criticism approaches to the study of prose fiction, poetry, drama. They will practice their skills in making judgements about works of literature and establish appropriate attitudes, such as: respect for each other's views; confidence in their own judgements; preparedness for active involvement. Students will read at least one novel, two plays, a selection of poetry and report on their reading to their peers.

Title: Equal Opportunities**Level:** CATS 1**Credit value:** 10**Pathway:** Community Studies, Counselling, Education, Sport, Theology**Start date:** September, January * M

This module will explore how prejudice occurs, different kinds of discrimination and the idea of equal opportunities as a response.

Equal opportunities will be analysed in terms of policy related to employment, and education and training. Positive discrimination, positive action and awareness training will be analysed in the context of good practice, particularly in terms of those who are working in the helping professions.

Title: Foundations of Counselling**Level:** CATS 1**Credit value:** 20**Pathway:** Community Studies, Counselling, Education**Start date:** September * M**N.B. daytime course only: 1:30 pm - 3:00 pm. This course lasts for 16 weeks.****Contact Registry for details of fees.**

This module is suitable for people who wish to explore counselling but have little previous knowledge or experience. It will introduce participants to core ideas about the counselling process and the role of the counsellor. Pre-registration is required.

Title: Internet Searching and Resource Application - An Introduction**Level:** CATS 1**Credit value:** 10**Pathway:** All**Start date:** September, January * T

This module is intended for those who have a little knowledge of computers and wish to be introduced to the world of the Internet and e-mail. Topics covered will include: the world-wide web - function and form; search tools and techniques; acquiring resources for use in other documents; e-mail; printing and file handling.

Title: Introduction to World Religions: Islam and Hinduism**Level:** CATS 1**Credit value:** 20**Pathway:** Community Studies, Theology**Start date:** September ** T

One of the great privileges of living in the modern world is the access it gives to the forms of life and religious traditions which have developed over hundreds and thousands of years. This module will provide an insight into Islam and Hinduism and students will be encouraged to consider the view that acquaintance with other traditions can deepen and complement one's own, and sometimes reveal shallow simplicities when what was required was a more thoughtful and universal view.



Title: Jazz - An Introduction

Level: CATS 1

Credit value: 10

Pathway: Creative Arts, Music

Start date: September, January * M

This module will involve a course of lectures and recorded music which examines the development of jazz from its early recordings to the present day. Styles such as New Orleans, Chicago, Swing, Bebop, West Coast, Jazz Rock and Free Jazz will be covered in some detail.

Title: Learning from Experience

Level: Multi-level

Credit value: 15

Pathway: All

Start date: September, January * M

Most individuals learn throughout their lives and sometimes the skills, knowledge and abilities they acquire can be equivalent to those obtained by students following traditional university courses. The recognition of individual achievement through credits and qualifications actually empowers the person, offering a currency which can be traded for opportunities for furthering learning or for employment. This module focuses on the identification and articulation of individuals' learning and on the process of claiming academic credit for prior and experiential learning. It will provide the opportunity for an individual to identify significant learning from experience and to match these skills and abilities from that learning to particular modules, or distinct parts of modules, to form an individual programme of study at appropriate levels within higher education.

Title: Making Critical Judgements in Art

Level: CATS 1

Credit value: 10

Pathway: Art, Creative Arts

Start date: September, January * T

This module will consist of a course of lectures, video films and gallery visits which aim to enhance students' appreciation of works of art by considering appropriate criteria by which they might be judged. Drawings and paintings in important local collections will be examined in some depth at first hand.

Title: Making Dances

Level: CATS 1

Credit value: 10

Pathway: Creative Arts, Dance

Start date: September, January * T

Students will participate in introductory theoretical and practical sessions on dance composition. Through workshops they will be encouraged to share a range of starting

points and composition processes. Observation and evaluation tasks will form an ongoing part of the course. There will be opportunities for presenting work in informal performance situations.

Title: Nineteenth-Century Social History

Level: CATS 1

Credit value: 10

Pathway: Community Studies, Education, History

Start date: January * W

This module explores the political and social effects of industrialisation. It traces the growth of new social classes in Britain and their struggle to claim a share in political power. Among the topics covered are the Reform Acts of 1832 and 1867, working class movements such as Chartism and the Ten Hours Movement, the debate about the position of women and the growth of trade unionism. The course offers a grounding in the use of a variety of source materials as evidence to support conclusions about historical debates.

Title: Professional and Ethical Issues

Level: CATS 1

Credit value: 20

Pathway: Community Studies, Counselling, Education

Start date: January * M

N.B. daytime course only: 1:30 pm - 3:00 pm + 1 Saturday workshop. This course lasts for 16 weeks. Contact Registry for details of fees.

This module is suitable for people who wish to work towards becoming counsellors. It aims to develop an ethical framework for counselling practice based on the British Association for Counselling's Code of Ethics and Practice. Pre-registration is required.

Title: Reading with Confidence

Level: CATS 2 / 3

Credit value: 10

Pathway: Education, English

Start date: September, January * M

Students will explore a variety of literary critical approaches and work in small groups to prepare a critical presentation for peer criticism and assessment. They will also improve their critical writing skills and encounter a variety of new and exciting literature. Questions raised by different approaches will be focused on through an exploration of a variety of literary texts across the genres of poetry (e.g. Shakespeare's Sonnets), prose (e.g. Edgar Allen Poe's short stories) and drama (e.g. Wilde's The Importance of Being Ernest).

Title: Religious Interests, Puzzles and Confusions

Level: CATS 1

Credit value: 20

Pathway: Theology

Start date: September ** W

What are the roots of religious life? What do people know? Where can one go from here? Miracles, prayer, eternal life, myths, evil, spirit, conjure up a world which is almost alien to the modern mind. Are we missing something? These are the questions which will be discussed together in this course.

Title: Skills of Counselling I

Level: CATS 1

Credit value: 10

Pathway: Community Studies, Counselling, Education

Start date: September * M

N.B. daytime course only: 3:30 pm - 5:00 pm + 1 Saturday workshop. This course lasts for 16 weeks. Contact registry for details of fees.

This is a practical introduction to basic counselling skills. It is suitable for people who wish to develop their interpersonal skills in any helping capacity. Pre-registration is required.

Title: Skills of Counselling II

Level: CATS 1

Credit value: 10

Pathway: Community Studies, Counselling, Education

Start date: January * M

N.B. daytime course only: 3:30 pm - 5:00 pm + 1 Saturday workshop. This course lasts for 16 weeks. Contact Registry for details of fees.

Participation on this course requires completion of the module Skills of Counselling I. This module seeks to extend the skill repertoire of participants by building upon the supportive and exploratory skills learnt in the first module. It is particularly suitable for those who wish to begin to train as counsellors.

Title: Sport Psychology - An Introduction

Level: CATS 1

Credit value: 10

Pathway: Sport

Start date: September, January * T

This module will focus on individual and group issues in sport and exercise psychology. This will include topics such as the psychology of team sports, stress management, effective leadership in sport and motivation for performance. Students will be given the opportunity to explore the application of psychological skills to the practical sport context.

Title: Studying Drama - An Introduction

Level: CATS 1

Credit value: 10

Pathway: Creative Arts, Education, English, Dance

Start date: September, January * T

Students will learn how to approach a drama text as a performance brief through study of a selection of different kinds of plays. They will appreciate something of the roles of the director, lighting, set and costume designers, props, sound and set-makers. Students will also become familiar with various workshop techniques, working with texts, basic voice and movement exercises.

Title: Study Skills and Methodologies in the Study of Religion

Level: CATS 1

Credit value: 10

Pathway: Theology

Start date: September, January * M

There have been disputes about what is the subject matter of the study of religion and thus the appropriate methodology. This module will consider these and students will be encouraged to reflect on the different approaches and will discuss the implications of these for the adopted methodology. In addition, the module will familiarise students with the skills required, and facilities available, for study at higher education.

Title: The Body in Action

Level: CATS 1

Credit value: 10

Pathway: Sport

Start date: September, January * W

This module will include defining issues of physical activity, exercise, fitness and health. Students will investigate the major systems and responses of the body related to physical exercise. This knowledge will be applied to kinesiological analysis of common sports techniques.

Title: The Century of Nationalism

Level: CATS 2 / 3

Credit value: 20

Pathway: Community Studies, Education, History

Start date: September ** T

Nineteenth-century nationalism has shaped the modern world. It destroyed continental empires, led to the creation of the modern states of Europe and contributed to the liberation movements which destroyed the global empires of France and Britain. This double module explores the effects of nationalist ideals, develops skills in historical analysis and offers the opportunity to study in a mixture of distance learning, electronic and classroom modes.

Title: The Individual and Society

Level: CATS 1

Credit value: 10

Pathway: Community Studies, Education

Start date: September, January * W

Individual adults and children may differ in many ways, including gender, ethnicity, age, ability/disability, economic circumstance and family structure. This module explores some of the effects these differences may have on the sort of choices individuals are free to make and their expectation for their own future

Title: Twentieth Century American Classical Music - An Introduction

Level: CATS 1

Credit value: 10

Pathway: Creative Arts, Music

Start date: September, January * T

This module will involve a course of lectures and recorded music which examines the development of American music from the late nineteenth century to the present day. the works of Ives, Copland, Partch, Cage, Riley and Reich, amongst others, will be considered in some depth.

Title: What is Dance?

Level: CATS 1

Credit value: 10

Pathway: Creative Arts, Dance

Start date: September, January * M

This module will introduce students to dance in its widest sense. It will involve practical and theoretical sessions on a range of dance techniques and styles, e.g. contemporary, jazz, social dance, cultural and folk dances, and historical dances. Through these sessions students will share and increase their knowledge and understanding of dance.

Title: Women Returning to Education

Level: CATS 1

Credit value: 10

Pathway: All

Start date: January, September * M

N.B. This course will also run on Wednesdays from 1.00 - 3.00 pm

This course will provide students with the skills necessary for academic success. It will operate through 2 hour workshops for ten weeks and cover research skills, essay writing and presentation skills to build confidence and competence. Support will be given through detailed individual and group tutorials.

Title: Women Returning to Work

Level: CATS 1

Credit value: 10

Pathway: Community Studies, Education

Start date: January, September * W

N.B. This course will also run on Mondays, from 1.00 - 3.00 pm

This course will operate through 2 hour workshops for ten weeks. It will cover essential skills including CV letters of application and interview techniques and students will be supported through individual tutorials. It is particularly designed for those students who have not been in the labour force or are returning to work.

Title: Word Processing and Spreadsheet Use - An Introduction

Level: CATS 1

Credit value: 10

Pathway: All

Start date: September, January * M

This module is intended for those who have a little knowledge of computers and wish to be introduced to word processing and spreadsheets via Microsoft Office. Topics covered will include: the process of word processing; moving text, page layout and text formatting; the basics of a spreadsheet; simple functions and formulas; charting from spreadsheets; incorporation of charts and images into text; printing and file handling.

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Pathways

MODULES	Art	Community Studies	Counselling	Creative Arts	Dance	Education	English	History	Music	Sport	Theology
Action Research		•				•	•				
Child Development						•					
Community & Youth Work in Detached Context		•									
Contemporary Issues & Sport										•	
Dance in the Community		•		•	•						
Drawing Media & Techniques An Introduction	•			•							
Education for Citizenship						•					
English Language Studies - An Introduction				•		•	•				
English Literature - An Introduction				•			•				
Equal Opportunities		•	•			•				•	•
Foundations of Counselling		•	•			•					
Internet Searching & Resource Application - An Introduction	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Introduction to World Religions: Islam & Hinduism		•									•
Jazz - An Introduction				•					•		
Learning from Experience	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Making Critical Judgements in Art	•			•							

MODULES	Art	Community Studies	Counselling	Creative Arts	Dance	Education	English	History	Music	Sport	Theology
Making Dances				•	•						
Nineteenth Century Social History		•				•		•			
Professional & Ethical Issues		•	•			•					
Reading with Confidence						•	•				
Religious Interests, Puzzles & Confusions											•
Skills of Counselling I		•	•			•					
Skills of Counselling II		•	•			•					
Sport Psychology - An Introduction										•	
Studying Drama - An Introduction				•	•	•	•				
Study Skills and Methodologies in the Study of Religion											•
The Body in Action										•	
The Century of Nationalism		•				•		•			
The Individual and Society		•				•					
20th Century American Classical Music - An Introduction				•					•		
What is Dance?				•	•						
Women Returning to Education	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Women Returning to Work		•				•					
Word Processing & Spreadsheet use - An Introduction	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

How To Apply

If you wish to apply for a short course offered in the Learning for Life programme you should fill in the application form on the page opposite and send it to:

**The Registry
Westhill College of Higher Education
Weoley Park Road
Selly Oak
Birmingham B29 6LL**

You may obtain additional application forms from the College Registry.

Applications for short courses can be made up until the beginning of the first session of the course you wish to apply for.

All course fees should accompany the application form and must be paid on or before the first session of the course. A discount of 10% applies to payments received by the College at least 1 week before the start of the course. In the event of a course not running, all fees paid will be reimbursed.

Advice

If you require advice or information about a longer programme of study or about APEL then you should first contact the Centre for Lifelong Learning. An adviser will discuss your learning requirements with you either on the telephone or in person and will advise you of the APEL process if this is applicable. You will be required to complete relevant application forms which can be obtained from the Centre and your application will then be processed by the College Registry.

What It Costs

The cost of the short course or module that you study will vary depending upon the credit value that it carries. As a general rule, most undergraduate courses are worth 10 credits and postgraduate courses are worth 20 credits. Some undergraduate courses are 'double modules' worth 20 credits. For the academic year 1998/1999 charges are as follows unless otherwise stated:

- 10 credit courses £65
- 20 credit courses £130

N.B. Counselling courses involve additional sessions at College and attract higher fees. Please contact the College Registry for details.

A dissertation is worth 40 credits at BPhil level and 60 credits at Masters level and is charged accordingly.

APEL - There is a charge for this scheme which varies dependent upon the process involved and amount of credit awarded. Please contact the College Registry or the Centre for Lifelong Learning for further details of costs.

Dates, Times & Further Information

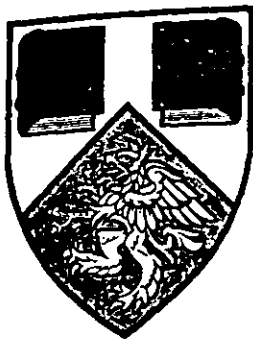
All courses will be held on the Westhill campus unless stated otherwise.

Courses will be held on either a Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday evening from 7.00pm to 9.00pm unless stated otherwise.

Most courses last for 10 weeks or equivalent.

Semester dates:

Semester 1	21.9.98 - 5.12.98
Semester 2	11.1.99 - 26.3.99



Westhill College of Higher Education

Weoley Park Road
Selly Oak
Birmingham B29 6LL

*A University Sector College accredited by and affiliated
to the University of Birmingham*

Tel: 0121 472 7245

Fax: 0121 415 5399

Registered Charity No: 528914

PASSPORT
SIZE
PHOTOGRAPH

Short Course Application/Enrolment Form

Complete this form using typescript or black ink suitable for photocopying and return to the Registry at the address above

Surname principal or family name Title (eg Dr, Mr, Mrs, Ms, Miss)

Personal or forenames (in full)

Permanent address (to which all correspondence will be sent)

.....

.....

Postcode:

Tel: Home: Business:

Fax: E-Mail:

Course Details - For which course(s) you are applying

1st Choice 2nd Choice

3rd Choice

Proposed starting date: Month Year

From what source did you learn of our courses? (If by advertisement, please specify)

.....

Fees

All course fees should be submitted with this form and must be paid on and before the 1st session of the course. **A discount of 10% applies to fees received at least one week prior to commencement of the course.** In the event of a course not running any fees paid will be reimbursed.

Personal Details

The information you provide does not affect judgements concerning your suitability for a course, and is treated confidentially. However, it enables data to be collected from which the progress of equal opportunities for all students in higher education can be monitored.

Sex: Male (M) ☐ Female (F) ☐ Married (M) ☐ Single (S) ☐ Date of Birth: Day Month Year

Country of birth Nationality

Country of domicile or permanent residence

Disability/Special Needs

In keeping with the Colleges' commitment to develop positive policies to promote equal opportunities in relation to people with disabilities, please state whether you have any disability or medical condition which might require any special arrangements or facilities. The information you provide does not affect judgements concerning your academic suitability for a course, and is treated confidentially. However, it enables data to be collected from which the progress of equal opportunities for disabled students in higher education can be monitored.

If you have a disability or special need, please enter the code from the list below that is most appropriate to you.

FOR OFFICE REFERENCE ONLY			
0	You do not have a disability or are not aware of any additional support requirements or accommodation	5	You need personal care support
1	You have dyslexia	6	You have mental health difficulties
2	You are blind/partially sighted	7	You have an unseen disability e.g. diabetes, epilepsy, asthma
3	You are deaf/hard of hearing	8	You have two or more of the listed disabilities/special needs
4	You are a wheelchair user/have mobility difficulties	9	You have a disability not listed

Disability Code Number

If you enter any code other than 0, please describe below any disability you have specified and give details of any special support you may require. Please use an additional sheet if necessary.

.....
.....

English Language Qualification

If your first language is not English, state which qualification in English Language (eg GCSE or equivalent, IELTS, TOEFL) you hold (with score or grade) or expect to hold before admission.

.....

Acknowledgement

If you wish your application to be acknowledged, please attach a self-addressed postcard with this application. I declare that the information above is true and complete.

Signature of applicant Date

NOTE: Whilst every effort is made to avoid any changes to the programme, published details may be altered without notice, at any time. The College reserves the right to withdraw or amend any part of of this programme without prior notice.

Frequently Asked Questions

What if I don't want to commit to studying for a degree?

You do not need to register for a degree. You can study any of the modules listed in this brochure as short courses. All of the courses have a credit value however, and if you decide that you want to work towards a formal qualification you may use the credit you have gained from relevant short courses towards that award.

The modular structure enables you to begin the programme by working towards a Certificate of Higher Education. If, after achieving the required amount of credit for a Certificate you wish to continue your studies, you may continue to the Diploma level and then, if you wish, to the Degree. At whichever point you choose to exit the programme you will receive the relevant award. You can gain a subject certificate after achieving only 60 credits.

How much time will it involve each week?

Unless the module is being delivered by distance learning, each module that you take is likely to involve 2 hours contact time a week when you will be required to attend a class at College or another designated site. In addition, you should expect to spend a further 4 hours engaged in independent study which may, depending upon the module you are taking, involve project work.

Can I get credit for relevant work experience?

Yes. The College APEL scheme enables you to claim credit for relevant work experience for up to two thirds of an undergraduate programme and up to one third of a postgraduate programme. The Centre for Lifelong Learning will be pleased to advise you on your eligibility for APEL.

Can I get credit for any studying I've done before?

Yes. Providing the studying you are claiming credit for is at the appropriate level and in an area relevant to the pathways you plan to study, then you may claim credit for up to two thirds of an undergraduate programme and up to one third of a postgraduate programme. The Centre for Lifelong Learning will be pleased to advise you on your eligibility for APEL.

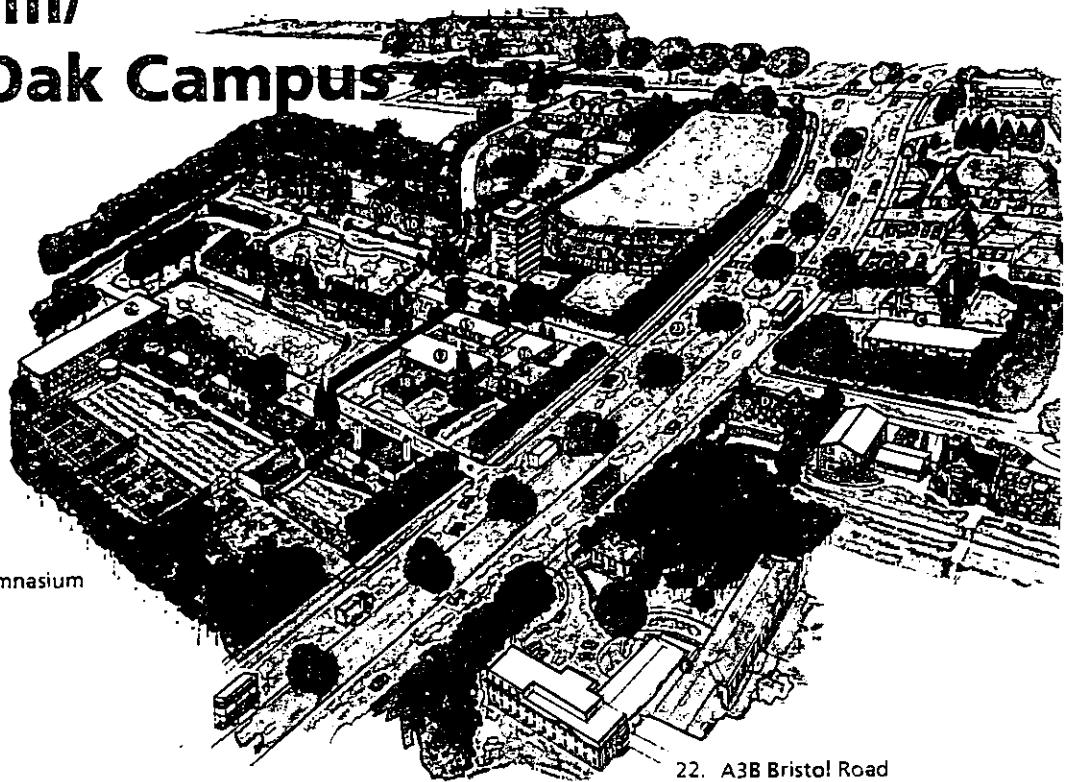
How much will it cost?

The cost of a module or short course is currently £65 for a 10 credit module and £130 for a 20 credit module and this is payable at the beginning of each course. Counselling courses are charged at a higher rate as they involve additional sessions at college. Please contact the Registry for details of fees. If you are using the APEL scheme, there is an administration and processing charge which varies depending upon the amount of credits awarded.

When will I have to pay?

Fees are payable on or before the first session of the module(s) that you are taking. You will receive a discount of 10% of the fee if payment is received by the College at least 1 week before the beginning of the module.

Westhill/ Selly Oak Campus

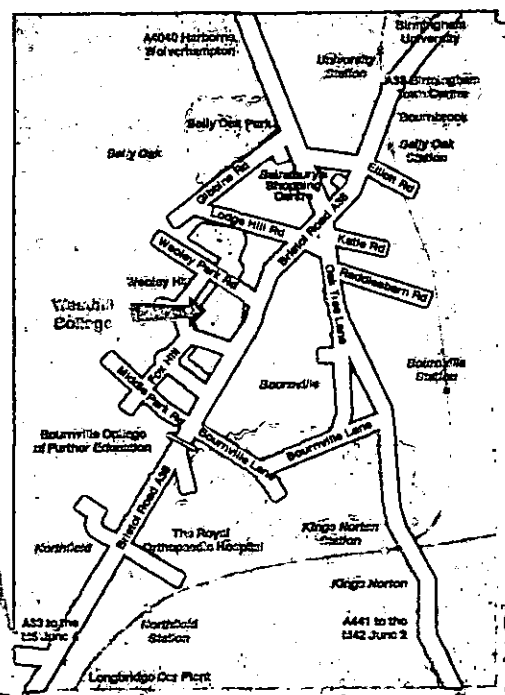
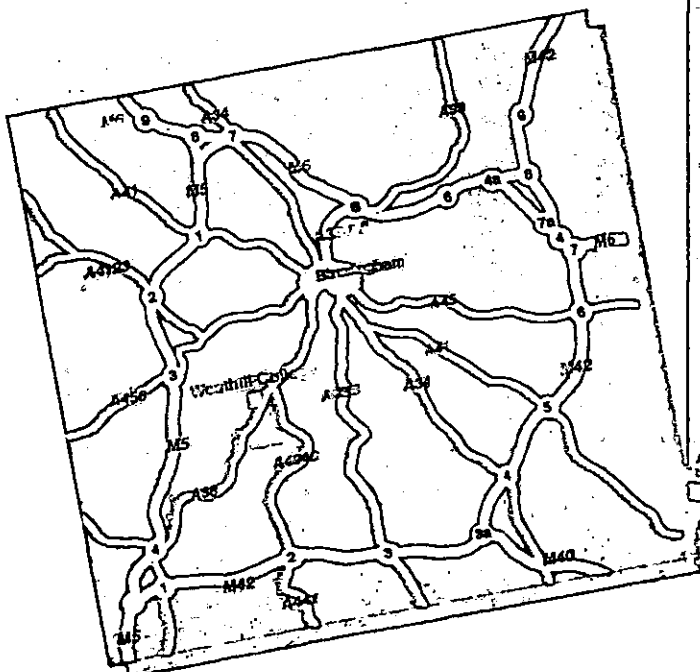


1. Teaching Centre and Gymnasium
2. Weoley Park Road
3. Hamilton Building
4. RECEPTION
5. Frank Price Building
6. Brooksbank
7. Mary Burnie
8. The Orchard Centre
 - Learning Resource Centre
9. Johnson House
10. Alan Geal
 - Bookshop
 - Health Centre
11. The Close
 - No's 10 and 11
12. The Close
 - No's 4 and 5
13. The Close
 - No 3

14. The Close
 - No's 1 and 2
15. Housekeeping
16. Melville Hall
 - Guild of Students
17. Rendezvous Restaurant
18. Chapel
19. Barrow Cadbury Hall
20. Archibald House
 - Conference Centre
21. Archibald Annexe

22. A38 Bristol Road
 - A Bus Stop
 - No's 61, 62 and 63 from City Centre
 - B George Cadbury Hall
 - C Gillett Centre
 - Swimming Pool
 - Squash Courts
 - Development Education Centre
 - D National Christian Education Centre
 - E Fircroft College (FE)
 - F Woodbrooke College
 - G Central House

How To Find Us



Glossary

CATS

This is the national Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme which recognises the level and amount of credit appropriate for awards and modules. The level determines the assessment standard. For example, a module in an undergraduate programme may be designated as CATS level 1 if it is at the entry level, or CATS level 3 if it is at the advanced level. Credit is awarded according to the amount of learning required and assessed. Masters level modules are designated M level.

APEL

If you have relevant prior experience and learning achievements these can be accredited and you may be entitled to enter a programme at different points beyond entry level by using APEL to gain advanced standing.

Advanced Standing

This means having sufficient prior experience and/or learning to enter a programme at a point beyond entry level. The point of entry will be determined by the amount of credits awarded through the APEL scheme.

Credit

The majority of higher education (HE) awards (Certificates of HE, Diplomas of HE and Degrees) have a credit rating. All of the HE awards in this Prospectus are in accordance with national levels. Awards are made up of modules which have an individual credit rating.

Module

A self contained unit of study. All programmes at Westhill are made up of modules. Modules are also offered independently as short courses.

The Prospectus describes the part-time courses that Westhill College intends to offer for the Academic Year commencing September 1993. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information included in this document but the College cannot take responsibility for any inaccuracies which may appear. Whilst the College intends, in all good faith, to implement what is described in the Prospectus, it cannot undertake any absolute obligation to provide the educational services and facilities detailed and must reserve the right to amend information, cancel, suspend or modify courses at any time.

For more information

Call 012 472 7245

Fax 012 475 5399

Email info@vesthill.co.uk

Website <http://www.vesthill.co.uk>



For more information, please contact the Vest Hill
Development Trust, 10, Church Street, Exeter, Devon, EX1 1AA

Appendix 3

Partnership between Westhill College and The University of Birmingham

Heads of Agreement Discussion Paper

♦ *12 October 1998* ♦

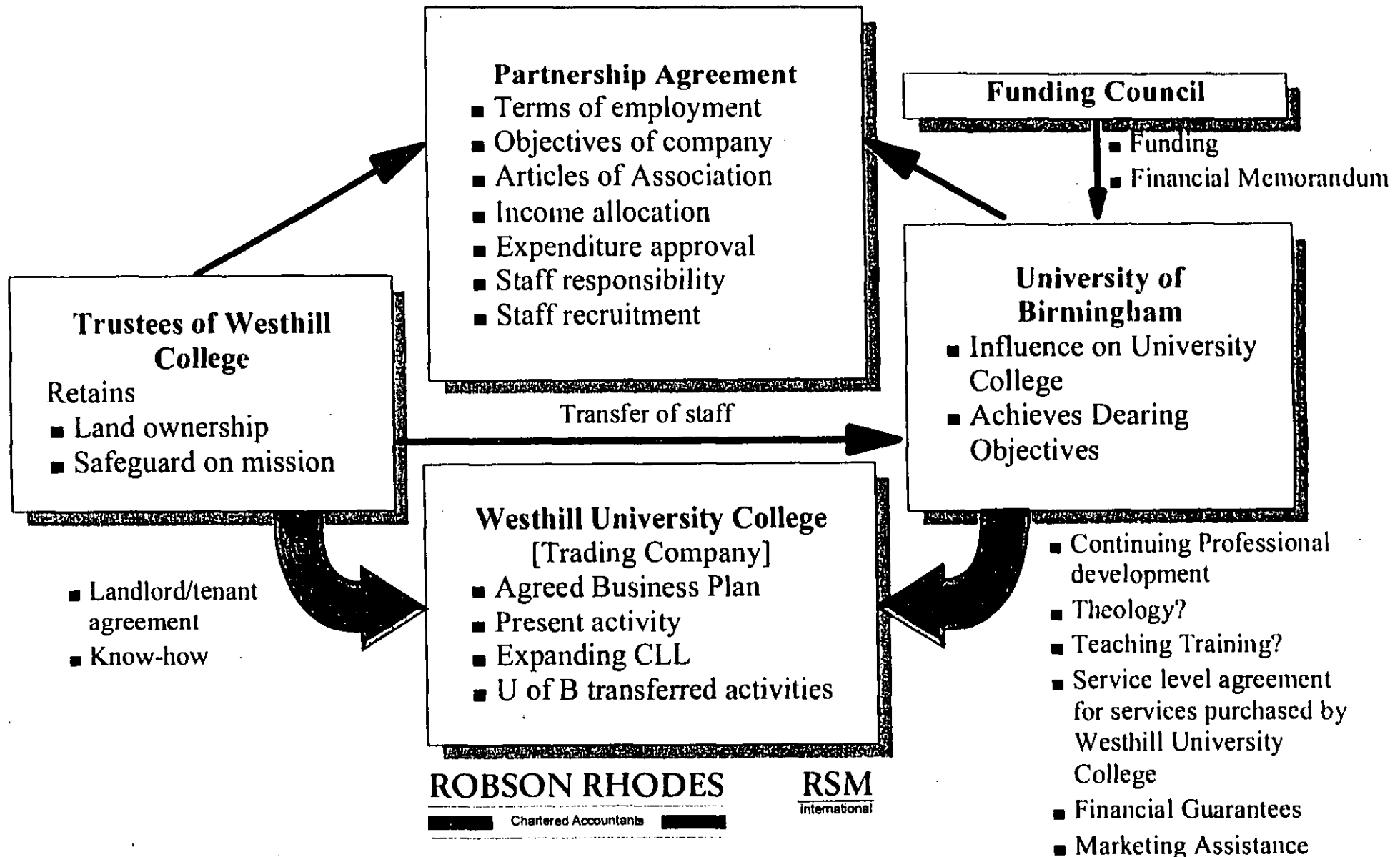
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4. Staffing	5
5. Funding and Finance	6
6. Land Agreements	7
7. Exit Routes	8

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This paper has been prepared for the use of the Westhill College Trustees and Senior Management team in their negotiations for strategic alliance with the University of Birmingham ("the University"). It is intended to act as an internal discussion paper to enable the College to agree on appropriate starting point on which to commence detailed negotiations with the University. It is envisaged that the heads of terms will then be developed and elaborated on through negotiation and will form a basis on which the College's legal advisers will prepare a full set of contractual documentation which will form the Membership (Partnership) Agreement.
- 1.2 The paper includes a schematic setting out our view on the potential contributions each of the partners could make to the alliance and the role of the Joint Venture Company ("the Company").
- 1.3 The schematic and the heads of agreement notes attached for discussion, are based on the core principles that if the advantages of the partnership are to be delivered then the Joint Venture Company has to be a trading company and to have management control of its workforce. Within this context the challenge for the JVC will be to operate within a structure which gives comfort to the University of Birmingham and to the staff working in the JVC, irrespective of their route into the company, whilst at the same time providing enthusiasm and commitment to both staff and the parties to the achievement of the agreed objectives of the strategic alliance.

Partnership between Westhill College and the University of Birmingham



2 STRUCTURE

- 2.1 The University of Birmingham and the Trustees of Westhill College will have equal representation on a newly formed Company limited by guarantee each having a 50:50 shareholding.
- 2.2 The new Company will be called Westhill University College.
- 2.3 The objectives of the Company will be structured in order to meet the objective of the revised Westhill College Trust Deed and to ensure that they are not contrary to the University's Charter.
- 2.4 The Articles of Association will include provision for the Trustees and the University to have "golden share" voting rights over reserved matters.
- 2.5 The reserved matters will include:
- for the Trustees:
- ♦ appointment of the Chairman;
 - ♦ appointment of the Principal who will also be the Chief Executive of the Company but will not have voting rights;
 - ♦ appointment of 50% of the Company's Board of Directors being 4 Directors;
 - ♦ final determination re within mission.
- for the University:
- ♦ appointment of 50% of the Company's Board of Directors being 4 Directors including the Vice-Chairman;
 - ♦ authorisation of amendments to the approved "annual budget" which have a projected financial cost in the current financial year in excess of say £100,000(?);
 - ♦ final determination re quality.
- 2.6 The Articles of Association will include provision for no changes to be made to the Articles without agreement by 100% of the voting shares.

2 STRUCTURE CONTINUED

2.7 The following will be entitled to attend the Board of Directors' meetings:

- ♦ Directors appointed by the University
- ♦ Directors appointed by the Trustees
- ♦ the Chief Executive of the Company
- ♦ the Deputy Principal and the Senior Administrative Officer of Westhill University College
- ♦ 2 officers appointed by the University
- ♦ the Secretary to the Board, who may be one of the appointed 8 Directors or a new appointment approved by majority voting
- ♦ other persons invited to attend future meetings as minuted and approved by 100% of the voting shares attending the Board meeting approving the attendance.

3 OPERATIONS

- 3.1 On an annual basis and prior to the start of a financial year, the Board of Directors will approve a business plan setting out:
- the detailed budget for the forthcoming financial year;
 - a three year forecast taking into account strategic plans.
- 3.2 The Chief Executive will be responsible to the Board for delivery of the agreed company objectives, the detailed budget, and maintenance of key ratios.
- 3.3 At each Board meeting the Board will receive financial information which reflects the current financial position of the Company and its projected out-turn for the current financial year. This information will consist of income and expenditure accounts, cash flows and balance sheets.
- 3.4 Any Director will be able to call an extra-ordinary meeting of the Board if at any time he/she becomes aware that the financial position in the year to date is say £100,000(?) worse than shown in the approved budget.
- 3.5 The Company will be able to purchase goods and supplies from any source subject to the following:

Whilst the company is projected to be operating at a deficit the University is given the opportunity to quote to provide goods and services on the same terms and conditions as other suppliers and will be selected if their specification and delivery dates are acceptable to the Company and the University's price is comparable to the lowest external bidder for the same or similar specification and delivery dates.

4 STAFFING

Note - Robson Rhodes ideas - to be reviewed/alterd by employment lawyer

- 4.1 All contracts of employment will be between the University and the employee.
- 4.2 For all staff transferring from Westhill College to the University the employment contract will incorporate a job description which sets out:
- ♦ that the employee will be working under the direction of the Chief Executive of the Company;
 - ♦ that the Chief Executive will have responsibility, which he can delegate, to prepare annual appraisals on each employee which will form the basis on which the employees salary review will be undertaken.
- 4.3 The Chief Executive will have delegated power from the Board to select and appoint new staff that were approved in the annual budget.

5 FUNDING AND FINANCE

- 5.1 HEFCE funds will be channelled through the University.
- 5.2 These funds will be “ring fenced” by the University and transferred to the Company less a management allowance to be agreed to reflect the actual administration costs incurred by the University for “their” employees working for the Company.
- 5.3 The direct cost of the employees used by the Company will be recoverable by charging the company for the direct cost of the employees salaries. As the HEFCE funding has been reduced to cover the administration cost of the staff this unit cost will reflect the actual cost of employing the employee.

an alternative method which will also need to be checked out for its VAT implications maybe

- 5.4 The salary costs of the staff will be recoverable by the University as part of the appropriation of surpluses made by the Company
- ♦ in the first instance no cost will be charged to the Company for the staff used;
 - ♦ this will result in the accounts for the Company showing surpluses;
 - ♦ these surpluses are then apportioned in the following way:
- 1st tranche - to the University up to an amount equal to the direct costs of the staff used by the College

any resulting surplus - split 50:50

In this way the financial position will be guaranteed and when surpluses are generated the cost of the staff is recovered by the University.

The split of remaining surpluses will need to be agreed.

This alternative method needs a careful VAT review but if workable solves the method by which the University underwrites the financial position using their own proposals of guaranteeing the wage costs.

- 5.5 Other than for “salary” apportionment of surpluses all surpluses will be retained in the Company until a surplus balance of £ (amount to be agreed) has been achieved to fund development opportunities.

6 LAND AGREEMENTS

- 6.1 The Trustees will retain all land ownership.
- 6.2 The Company will enter into agreements with the Trustees for the use of the land.
- 6.3 These agreements will be for a peppercorn rent
or alternatively
- 6.4 These agreements will be at the lower of:
 - (a) a market rent and
 - (b) the amount of surplus available for appropriation if 5.4 is adopted ie if there is a surplus after the University has been paid back the salary costs then the Trustees "investment" in the JVC should be identified and recognised. This surplus would not be extracted from the Company unless the cumulative surplus "reserve" figure had been reached.
- 6.5 All land agreements will run for the length of the JVC agreement.

7 EXIT STRATEGY

- 7.1 To ensure that there is no detrimental effect on students a notification period of years ? will be needed to end the JVC agreement.
- 7.2 In the event of such notice the members of the agreement will have the option to be able to sell their shares in the company to the other member. The shares to be valued in accordance with evaluation method to be agreed.

or

If the other party does not wish to purchase the shares then the "selling" member will have the right to offer the shares to another party.

DRAFT

WITHOUT PREJUDICE

**STRATEGIC ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM
AND WESTHILL COLLEGE
HEADS OF AGREEMENT**

PURPOSE

The University of Birmingham (the University) and Westhill College of Higher Education (Westhill) wish to form a strategic alliance in order to achieve the following objectives:

For the University of Birmingham

- a. to provide further opportunities and facilities for greater access to higher education for non-traditional and under-represented groups, particularly in the West Midlands region.
- b. to provide for a wider provision of part-time programmes and for enhanced continuing education programmes.
- c. to provide a focus for wider continuing professional development programmes at all levels.

For Westhill College

- a. to afford long term protection of the College's Mission**
 - b. to provide financial stability for the future for the College and certainty for its staff and students.
 - c. to provide a pathway for the further development and diversity of higher education activity at the College.
- and, Jointly to enable possible new developments to take place which might be appropriate within the context of the strategic alliance.**

MECHANISMS

1. A strategic alliance shall subsume the current accreditation arrangements between Westhill and the University. The activities of teacher training and certificate, diploma and degree programmes (and any other awards) currently delivered at Westhill via an accreditation arrangement with the University, together with any new awards, will derive directly from the degree awarding status of the University under the jurisdiction of its Senate.
2. Westhill shall retain a separate identity within the joint framework of the strategic alliance in order to provide continuity with its history and role, and to enable the alliance to pursue its distinctive mission in relation to widening access to higher education. The working title of the campus at Westhill shall be Westhill College, The University of Birmingham. *This title shall be determined before contracts are signed with both parties being informed by the development of an external relations and marketing strategy for the alliance.*
3. Development of the strategic alliance is contingent upon the Privy Council or the Charity Commissioners, as appropriate, agreeing to widen the current provisions of the Westhill Trust Deed, in order to ensure that the objectives of the strategic alliance can be legally fulfilled.
4. Subject to Privy Council approval and to the strategic alliance being entered into, the University, shall provide for a Trustee of Westhill to sit on the Governing Council of the University for as long as the strategic alliance remains in force.
5. The strategic alliance is contingent upon appropriate arrangements being entered into with the Trustees of Selly Oak Colleges Endowment Trust, and any other interested parties in land and buildings to be used by the alliance, in order to ensure that there is sufficient security of tenure to permit the alliance to fulfil its objectives.
6. The Higher Education Funding Council for England shall be the lead body for accounting purposes for both the University and Westhill.
7. There shall be a single Financial Memorandum between the University and the Higher Education Funding Council for England covering the activities of both the University and Westhill and reflecting the institutional plans of both. Discussions shall be held with HEFCE regarding appropriate statements in the Financial Memorandum in relation to activities at Westhill.
8. The Designated Officer for accounting purposes for both the University and Westhill shall be the Vice-Chancellor for the time being of the University. The Vice-Chancellor will act as the Designated Officer singularly and severally in respect of the University and Westhill.

9. Arrangements will be made with the Higher Education Funding Council for England to identify separately the components of recurrent grant and student numbers indicated for Westhill, although the overall announcement of block grant and student numbers will be made to the University. The University and Westhill will discuss arrangements whereby for accounting purposes any financial involvement of the Trustees of Westhill is recognised.
10. Joint discussions will continue to be held between the University and Westhill with the Teacher Training Agency with a view to ensuring that the support received from that body is consistent with the objectives of the strategic alliance.
11. Westhill and its staff shall work within the powers and the quality control and assurance processes of the Senate and the Academic Board of the University in a similar way to existing staff of the University. In order to assure quality Westhill shall adopt common procedures for academic management alongside those current within the University.
12. An agreement will be reached prior to the signature of contracts between the University and Westhill in relation to the exact status of students at Westhill in such matters as application, registration, representation and discipline.
13. Jointly, the Council of the University and the Trustees of Westhill shall form a Company, limited by guarantee with charitable status, to be the vehicle for the governance of the strategic alliance. The membership of the Board of the Company shall be agreed following discussion between the University and Westhill and shall reflect the interests of the two institutions in the alliance.
14. The Company will enable the Trustees to meet their obligations under the Trust Deed, and will be the mechanism to meet the agreed objectives of the strategic alliance. It is not envisaged at least initially that the Company will trade in commercial terms. It shall be the vehicle whereby the physical assets necessary to achieve the objectives of the alliance are made available on terms which provide comfort to the University and Westhill. Professional advice will be taken in relation to the tax position of the institutions and the Company.
15. That further thought will be given and agreement reached on the integration and location of operations that reflect the joint purpose and initial business plan activity of the strategic alliance. Thereafter joint plans for academic and other activities at Westhill and the financial and management plans to underpin them shall be agreed through the Board of the Company.

16. The necessary assets of Westhill to achieve the jointly agreed academic and business plans shall be made available by the Trustees of Westhill to the alliance on terms to be agreed. Where applicable the University and Westhill shall seek to ensure access to these assets where they are held by third parties e.g. the Selly Colleges Endowment Trust.
17. Principal drafting re. Instruments and Articles.
18. The Principal of Westhill College shall become a Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University of Birmingham and shall, subject to Privy Council approval, be an ex-officio member of the Senate of the University. The Principal of Westhill shall also be a member of the Strategy, Planning and Resources Committee and, subject to the approval of the Privy Council, the Council of the University.
19. The Principal of Westhill shall be the chief academic and administrative officer of Westhill, within the framework agreed jointly through the Company, the University Senate and Council, and subject to overall responsibility to the Vice-Chancellor of the University.
20. In the interests of simplicity and efficiency, Westhill and the University shall adopt common systems and administrative processes wherever practicable, working through the administrative departments of the University and avoiding duplication. The partners will constantly review areas of activity which optimise the advantages of joint working and agree that the routes to secure such advantages may change from time to time.
21. Westhill will need to agree with The University of Birmingham and the Funding Authorities protocols for the making of bids so that they can be made jointly or severally as appropriate, and for data being aggregated or segregated as may be most appropriate.
22. Subject to the necessary assurances e.g. relating to the widening of the Trust Deed, the approval of the Funding Bodies, and the availability on appropriate terms of the necessary assets, the University will be willing to employ the current staff of Westhill recognising the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations. Further discussion will take place between the University and Westhill, consulting the relevant Trade Unions as necessary, as to how this process will be carried out in detail, including pension arrangements.
23. It is recognised between the University and Westhill that there may be a need for an assembly to provide an advisory, promotional and networking

forum for Westhill, which is separate from the Court of the University. Further discussions will be held between the institutions on this matter.

24. The progress of the strategic alliance shall be kept under review but that the alliance shall endure for a minimum period of 5 years. In the event of either party wishing to withdraw from the alliance it shall give at least 5 years' notice to the other party in order fully to safeguard the interests of the parties and of their staff and students. Discussions will take place with a view to devising mechanisms to enable the Trustees to continue to operate the College in the event of the University giving notice of withdrawal from the alliance.
25. The parties agree to work together with a view to bringing the strategic alliance into effect from 1 August, 1999 or as soon as possible thereafter.

DJA/KMD/A13
29.10.98

ACTION PLAN STRATEGIC ALLIANCES - KEY DATE FOR COMPLETION - 1ST QUARTER 1999

MAIN ACTION	KEY STEPS	DATE FOR COMPLETION	PROGRESS
1. Develop broader based Accreditation Agreement with University of Birmingham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Present cases to Accreditation Committee - Renegotiate Agreement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Immediate - 1998/9 	AT 01.02.99 See 5 below
2. Develop stronger alliance with University of Birmingham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investigate scope and legal requirements for preferred model of alliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 6 months Heads of Agreement, 12-18 months to complete 	See 5 below
3. Develop a stronger alliance with Oxford Brookes University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Determine if single or dual alliance - Determine model of alliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If proceeding Heads of Agreement 6-9 months 	See 5 below
4. Investigate further the opportunity identified with the University of Central England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gain understanding of the precise nature of present offer - Negotiate revised offer if appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 8 weeks/May - Open 	See 5 below
5. Investigate opportunities	For each Institution: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Determine model of alliance - Determine if single or dual alliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - April 1998 - May 1998 	Heads of Agreement document agreed as the basis for further negotiation by UOB Council and Westhill Governors 09.12.98.
6. Renegotiate Agreement with Federation of Selly Oak Colleges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Re-examine the contribution each one can make - academic/physical resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Heads of Agreement 1.1.99 	"Heads" recognise relationship. Service Level Agreements substituted for Joint Resources Unit.

ACTION PLAN RELATIONSHIP WITH FUNDERS

MAIN ACTION	KEY STEPS	DATE FOR COMPLETION	PROGRESS
1. Ascertain if MASN can be restored to 1000 level to stabilise the College	- Negotiation with HEFCE	- 1.4.98	AT 01.02.99 Westhill bidding jointly with UOB and UCE – see also JHYB note attached.
2. Determine the changeover (or otherwise) of lead accountant TTA/HEFCE	- Receive evidence of Department of Education consideration (information important to alliance/policy)	- Immediate/asap	AT 01.02.99 TTA have agreed the principle. HEFCE response awaited. No difficulties presently foreseen: UOB anxious to achieve asap. <u>Matters still outstanding.</u>
3. Secure acceptance of this Plan and Agreement on review stages	- Formal presentation of Plan from Westhill Governors to Funding Authorities	- End March 1998	AT 01.02.99 Plan agreed 28.2.98 and under action/on target.

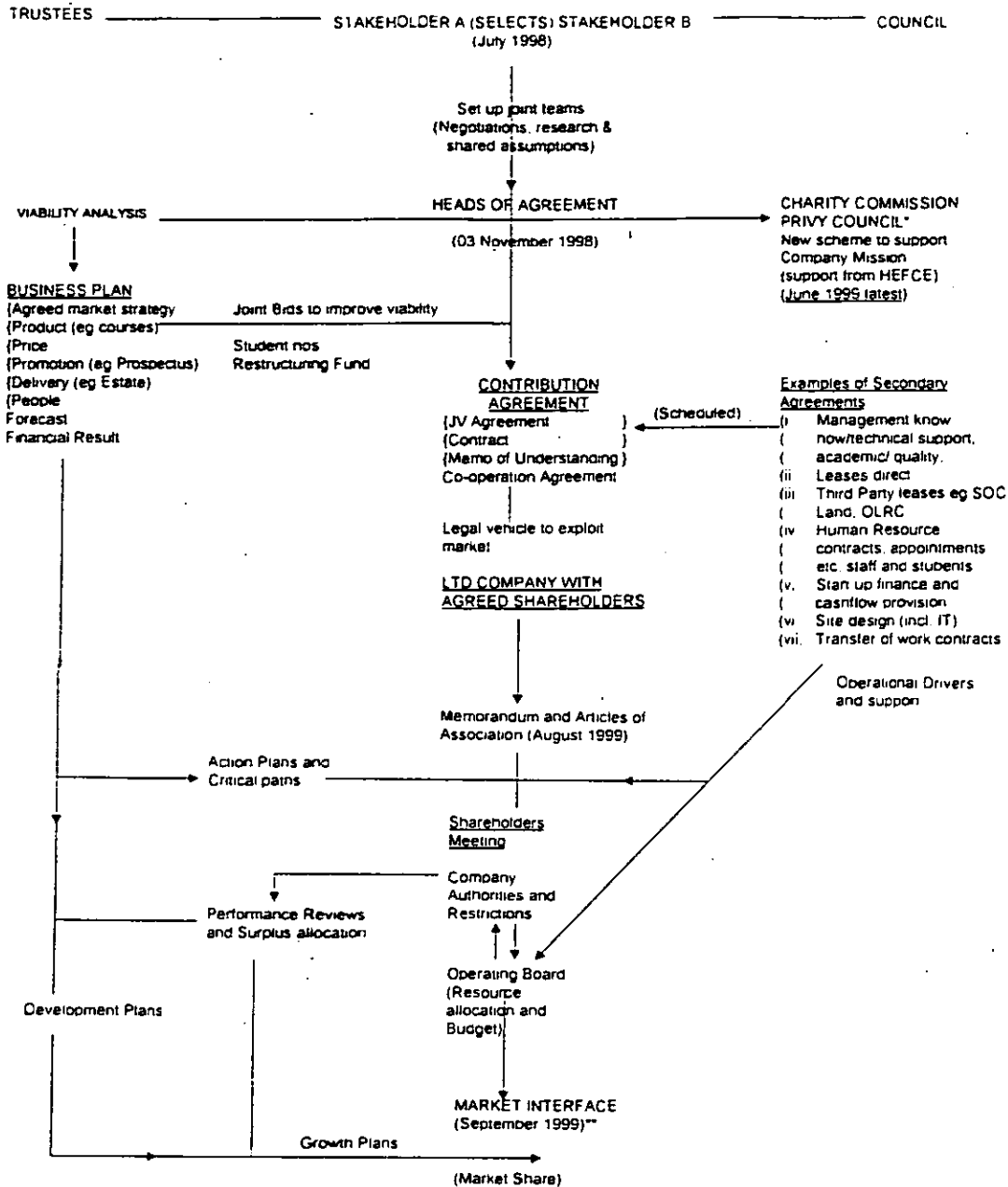
ACTION PLAN (CLL)

MAIN ACTION	KEY STEPS	DATE FOR COMPLETION	PROGRESS
1. <u>Appoint Staff</u> - Director - Programme Leader - Secretary	- Advertise - Interview - Contract - Induction Programme	- Immediate - Up to end March - March/May - August-Sept (or prior)	AT 01.02.99 All staff in post: secretarial role now being modified to Sales Co-ordinator
2. Sales Plan	- Develop detailed Business Plan - Set targets - Set MIS system	- Sept 1998 - Sept 1998 - Sept 1998	AT 01.02.99 Plan & targets set. MIS system embryonic: Sales Co-ordinator appointed.
3. Academic and Quality backup for all aspects of CLL	- Identify supporting networkers - Set up Programme - Set Quality Control procedures	- Sept-Dec 1998 - Sept-Dec 1998 - Sept-Dec 1998	AT 01.02.99 Detailed procedures being agreed with UOB to maintain quality control of fast developing Israel student intake.
4. Assign existing full or part time College staff of any	- Identify any staff with key ability or knowledge - Negotiate contract amendment - Rejoin into team	- June 1998 - Open - Open	AT 01.02.99 Staff identified and working on specific programmes eg - part-time courses - Israel (see 3. above)
5. Monitor sales progress	- Monthly trend analysis - Account potential analysis	- Ongoing - Ongoing	AT 01.02.99 D Davies, Deputy Principal, submitting report to Review meeting.

ACTION PLAN ESTATES

MAIN ACTION	KEY STEPS	DATE FOR COMPLETION	PROGRESS
1. Examine space utilisation opportunities with new alliance/partner	- Space survey against new need	- Open	AT 01.02.99 All landholding information reviewed and condition survey has been re-checked by UOB. Condition considered satisfactory.
2. Residential Accommodation	- Review policy on residences and student offers (eg self-catering)	- September 1998	AT 01.02.99 Residences reduced in numbers. Self-catering not to be introduced at this stage. Archibald Conference Centre now free of students for development. Licence works completed.
3. Sports Facility (Lottery/PFI)	- Feasibility Study - Application for funds - Project Team and Build	- Jan 1999 - March 1999 - Nov/Dec 1999	Project lapsed in preference to review of joint use of facilities with UOB for the time being.
4. Conference Accommodation Archibald	- Complete refurbishment - Complete licence application - Target sales plan over £280k per annum	- Sept 1998 - June 1998 - Sept 1998	AT 01.02.99 See 2. above. Management Accounts results 11/98 in pack.
5. Recost Condition Survey for annual savings of £50k	- Resurvey in conjunction with professional auditors	- June 1998	Revised and re-budgeted at £250k per annum.
6. Land analysis for possible sale and investigation of federal leases	- set up "land terrier" - revalue within next year's 1998/9 accounts	- June 1998 - June 1998	AT 01.02.99 On hold pending formal discussions with UOB within a new Academic & Business Plan which will need to drive and inform Estates' issues in the future.

Discussion Document (Without Prejudice)

OUTLINE OF UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM/WESTHILL COLLEGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION JOINT VENTURE**NOTES**

* Privy Council (short Route)/Charity Commission (Long Route)

** Note implications of delay 200/2001

Commonly accepted paradox of Joint Ventures

(i) whatever the equity % if one side is constantly overruled, co-operation ceases.

(ii) Joint Ventures are largely self-determining but not self-supporting**Summary of Agreements**

HEADS/Revised Trust Deed

Contribution Co-operation Agreement

Secondary Support Agreements

(eg know how, leases, Resource Contracts, Finance Site Design)

1st shareholder meetings

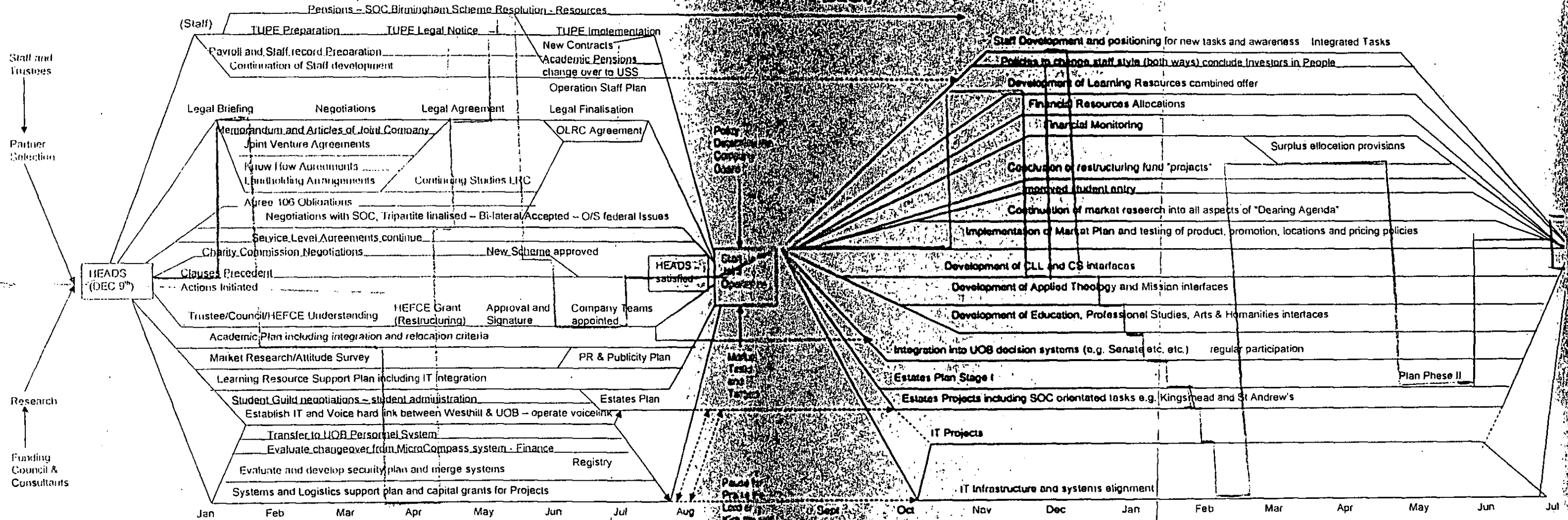
Third Party Agreements

Critical Dates

1. Agree HEADS, UOB Council and WH Trustees 03 November 1998.
2. Revised Trust Deed June 1999
3. 1st Shareholders Meeting August 1999.
4. Market Operation commences September 1999

DRAFT

CRITICAL PATH (DRAFT) (VALUE CREATION MODE)



Appropriate structures for the Strategic Alliance: an initial response by David Davies

It is understood that the 'structures' paper is concerned with procedures and structures and is not focussed on individuals. I hope that my comments can be viewed as a positive response to what is clearly a major step towards clarity of purpose for the strategic alliance.

Context

Whereas the general and overt contexts are those stated in the paper and are about forming an "alliance" for mutual advantage", we need to be clear amongst ourselves at Westhill that the primary reason for our actions is an impending financial deficit. Our problems in securing and recruiting enough funded places to maintain viability over the medium term (2/3 years) is the real context.

Bearing this in mind, and noting the shortfall in 1998 recruitment to UCAS full-time courses and the intense local competitiveness for part-time students at both HE and FE levels, I feel the paper could and should focus on the issues of the curriculum we need and the associated financial benefits. In concrete terms, this means the alliance framework should specifically set out what will happen with the University of Birmingham's Continuing Studies provision. The management relationship, reporting lines, how it fits in to Westhill's management and committee structures and how the new alliance fits with the University itself should be explicitly laid out in the structure framework. To leave this whole issue as an implicit 'unspoken' and tacit accomplishment is to be hostage to fortune at best.

Westhill's mission is not that different from that of Continuing Studies and this is further complicated by our own Centre for Lifelong Learning. Failure to clarify the mission of the alliance and its management structure at an early stage could lead to ill feeling and even chaos later.

I assume that this structures paper will be the basis for the Agreement between Westhill and the University of Birmingham, and therefore, will set the operating framework for the alliance. It is vital, therefore, that we begin from a strong negotiating position based on two factors:

- (I) a clear and explicit view of our curriculum (and mission)
- (II) how we are to act on behalf of the whole alliance (and therefore how Westhill's remit for work is represented academically and managerially within the University).

This is the least we need to demand if we are to present a new curriculum face for a new period in the College's development. We must change the management structures of WH, Continuing Studies and the CLL. Staff will need to move into new categories of work, and, in short, the College will need to substantially re-invent itself in order to play an alliance part as against reproducing the relatively closed cultures of College and University.

(Part 1)

General Issues and Comments

The major concern I have is whether we have fully stated the benefits that Westhill will bring to the alliance and thereby sought to have these formally enshrined in the alliance – at the levels of both policy framework and organisational/operational structure?

What Westhill offers needs to be derived from its new mission, and this requires formal acknowledgement within the alliance, in terms of both policy and organisational structure. The structures paper as it currently stands lists the profile of courses to be offered at Westhill (Appendix A). It does not explicitly seek to construct the alliance in terms of an agreed remit for Westhill to develop and manage an educational agenda on behalf of both sides of the alliance.

An alternative approach would be, I think, to ask and answer the question – what does Westhill offer the University and how will this be recognised within the structures required for the alliance? We cannot expect the University to simply accede to WH's request to be responsible for the total Dearing agenda on behalf of the whole University, through the strategic alliance. That would be unreasonable. However, we could specify our wish to act for the whole alliance in developing policy and practice covering for example:

- Multi-strand Combined Honours courses
- Interdisciplinary studies
- APL/APEL
- Work-related learning/lifelong learning
- Access programmes and Outreach provision
- FE and Adult Education Liaison
- Regional Awards Scheme

Such an approach would take us further towards a concrete remit for College development with the University than the hoped for congruencies (para. 4) and the financially driven contracts for services, which it is suggested will evolve into relationships of synergy and economy (para. 8). I believe such relationships will only evolve successfully if there is mutual and reciprocal recognition of functions, capacities and responsibilities. Such recognition requires, in my experience, two-way representation of a more explicit kind than described in the structures paper so far.

The current proposals suggest that the Westhill Principal and Chief Executive of the JDC/BM holds the title of PVC at the University of Birmingham and will sit on the U of B SPRC. This is very much to be welcomed. However, if we wish to act for the 'corporate alliance' as a development 'animateur', remitted to work as a genuine partner, we need

wider recognition of our function and deeper representation within the University itself for Westhill senior management. As things stand within the proposal, University of Birmingham policy inputs to the Westhill Board of Management is by U of B representatives on the BM and the Westhill Principal, who will sit on the U of B SPRC (and elsewhere?). There is thus a deficit of representation of Westhill within the University's structures, which would and should facilitate the dialogue needed to develop collaborative academic policy involving the two institutions. Some policy creating input from Westhill to the U of B is needed which extends the influence of the WH Principal on University structures. This would facilitate and guarantee a policy related input to the BM which emanates from the Westhill and U of B partnership and not exclusively from the University, or separately from Westhill.

In summary – we need in the framework document:

1. Recognition of the (new) WH mission and a remit to work on behalf of the whole alliance to develop and enhance the range of programmes available in the two institutions.
2. Cross-representation at academic and management levels within appropriate University Committees or structures (or the creation of a joint policy group which can debate policy and which would be binding on both alliance partners, with reference to the strategic remit agreed for Westhill).

(Part 2)

Specific Points

Para 7 - with whom will the Westhill financial memorandum be negotiated? (HEFCE, U of B?).

Para 11 - employment of staff – this was, in my view, a crucial element in the WH staff's 'acceptance' of the U of B as the alliance partner; resolution is paramount.

Para 14 - it is vital that the senior management officers of WH are BM members with executive responsibilities and duties.

Para 16 - the phrase..."action requested by WH trustees of the JDC will be performed at cost" is cryptic.

Para 34 - could this be less overtly protectionist, -..."alliance turns sour" is poorly phrased.

Appendix A – point 8 – could we add "liaison with adult, continuing and further education".

Appendix B – point 3 – a sentence is repeated.

**The establishment of appropriate structures for Westhill College's
strategic alliance with the University of Birmingham:
some considerations**

I CONTEXT

1. It has been agreed that Westhill College (WH) and the University of Birmingham (UOB) should, with the support of HEFCE and TTA, form a strategic alliance to mutual advantage. Reinforcing the strengths of past relationships, this will provide the basis for further collaboration to the advantage of both the midland region and to higher education nationally.
2. As envisaged, the alliance would see WH continue as a separate Higher Education Institution (Westhill University College) but with an operational brief which interprets its mission as distinctive, but congruent with that of UOB. The vehicle to be used would be a Joint Development Company (JDC) on which the Council of UOB and the Trustees of WH have equal representation. Provisions would exist for the operation of 'golden share' protections for each/either partner.
3. A JDC operates through a Board of Management (BM), and the ways in which this functions in the commercial world are well established. What is needed for the proposed alliance is to relate and adjust that commercial pattern of functioning to the academic objectives and structures of the partners in the alliance.
4. In developing a strategic alliance it is important that the process is seen as evolutionary. Thus what is required at this stage is a *modus operandi* for the immediate future, not a once-and-for-all mechanism. It is, however, also important that from the outset, congruencies are sought with the existing UOB patterns of operation wherever possible.
5. The Chief Executive of the JDC would be the Principal of WH who would also hold the title Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Westhill) within UOB.
6. The University's generous offer of a place for a Westhill Trustee to sit on the University Council is noted.

II FINANCE

7. Central to the functioning of a JDC in the academic world must be the issue of finance. In the context of an alliance and not a merger it is believed that HEFCE will continue to fund WH direct or through a ring-fenced/earmarked allocation to UOB. WH will continue to have its own financial memorandum with HEFCE.
8. It is expected that over time relationships of synergy and economy will evolve between WH and UOB. The initial steps can be expected to take the form of contracts for services.
9. The College will continue to monitor its costs closely, and on the basis of those costs and a need to secure margins of profitability in the context of market factors, set its charges for subsidiary services including short courses and non-traditional educational packages.
10. It is important that HEFCE recognises that the alliance creates a joint and several relationship. This will need to be reflected in both Higher Education policy considerations and in the presentation of data (eg to HESA, RAE and other like exercises where we need to preserve the freedom as to what processes best serve the alliance, jointly and severally). The Funding Council will also be expected to recognise the exchanges of services that take place over time and to respond practically to new alignments of activity and new initiatives.
11. The issue of the employment of staff, joint employment of staff, secondment of staff to College/University functions is at present unresolved.

12. College and University together need to develop an appropriate strategy for maximising their appeal to the Funding Council's Restructuring Fund.

III BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

13. The BM of the JDC will reflect the interests of the two institutions in alliance. It will not, therefore, have the representative character of the present WH Boards of Trustees and Governors. Consideration must be given to providing within the structure for a continuance of this representative function. (cf the UOB Court of Governors).
14. The detailed makeup of the BM will need to be considered in due course. In particular it will be necessary to determine whether the Chief Executive and certain other employed officers of WH should be members of the BM and if so, how.
15. New arrangements will have to be made for staff and student representation within WH. This will be at below board level. It might well be that the annual meeting of Governors and staff be replaced by an annual meeting between Directors and staff. It would probably be appropriate and indeed necessary for the accounts of the Student Guild to be submitted through the General Purposes and Finance Committee to the Board of Directors but for the Guild President to present an annual report to the College Committee and the Court of Governors.
16. It is recognised that the WH Trustees will necessarily continue to exercise responsibility to their Trust Deed. It must be understood that they will only take action in areas of activity assigned to the JDC with the agreement of the BM, and that any action requested by the WH Trustees of the JDC will be performed by the JDC at no less than cost.

IV WESTHILL COURT OF GOVERNORS

17. As suggested in Para 13 such a body is probably needed as an annual advisory, promotional and networking forum, preserving links with church sponsors, present staff, students, alumni and other partners.
18. If so, then both staff and students should be represented on this body, as would the Trustees and Directors, and those church and community interests which presently have a representational function on the Board of Governors.
19. It would also be the ideal place for Selly Oak federal interests to be represented, by, for example, the President, the Chairman of Council and the Chairman of the Endowment Trustees or other nominees. Indeed it might wish to establish a separate Selly Oak Colleges Liaison Committee.
20. The Principal shall, on behalf of the College, present to Court an Annual Report.

V FUNCTIONING OF THE JDC

21. A JDC has to operate to a remit covering overall policy and operations. In this instance the remit will be determined by agreement jointly by the Council of UOB and the Trustees of WH.
22. Operational delivery of the remit will be the responsibility of the BM. In this respect the BM can be seen, in UOB terminology, as functioning as a sub-level SPRC (Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee). It would be responsible for delivery of the agreed objectives in the designated field within the constraints of the financial provision available expressed in a business plan approved by the BM.
23. Policy input from the Trustees of WH will be direct to the BM of the JDC.
24. Policy input from UOB will be from two directions: (i) direct to the BM of the JDC (exceptional); (ii) through or from SPRC via the Principal of WH who will sit on this committee as a member.

25. The formal line of communication from WH to UOB will be: (i) via the JDC to the SPRC and (ii) via the Principal sitting on SPRC.
26. The intention is that it will be possible to short-circuit (ii) above by developing direct exchange and interaction as appropriate between the WH College Board and its Boards of Study and relevant units and individuals in UOB. WH believes that such links will evolve naturally within the alliance.
27. A flow chart illustrating the above is appended.
28. At Westhill the following committees which have reported to the Board of Governors would now become sub-committees of and report to the Board of the JDC:

Audit
Finance and General Purposes
Personnel and Staffing
Remuneration

It is believed that a new sub-committee on External Relations will become necessary.

V TRANSITION

29. The creation of a strategic alliance would be a major development in relations between the institutions. It also has the potential to bring about significant change in the delivery of Higher Education in the Midlands. However, the ongoing operations of each institution have to continue and so it is important to ensure that change disrupts ongoing work as little as possible. This may well call for the adoption of interim procedures.
30. It is particularly important for the operation of WH that there is a seamless transition in respect of accreditation and the College's existing freedom to innovate is protected.
31. Existing agreements and permissions for the broad framework of courses and College structures already agreed with the University through the mechanism of the old accreditation agreement should all be transferred to the new Westhill management with its Academic Board having power to resolve matters of detail which come within such agreed frameworks.
32. Though hitherto the College has not had the powers of registering its own research students, it is believed that this was an anticipated change in the re-accreditation of the College and that it should form part of the new relationship between College and University, leaving to the College the timing of its introduction in the different areas of its work.
33. The College sees its partnership with the University as being a matter of well-founded evolution, rather than one of dramatic change. It hopes that all parts of the College will find enriching partnerships with appropriate colleagues and enterprises in the University.
34. In particular it is aware of the need to be aware of the interests of colleagues who in many cases have given many years of service in the School of Continuing Education, and will wish to pay particular attention, in conversation with Professor Martin, to how this work will in future relate to the work of the College's Centre for Lifelong Learning.

VI REVIEW AND CONTINUATION

35. Good practice would suggest that the performance of the alliance between WH and UOB should be reviewed after five years by a mechanism jointly agreed by the Council of UOB and the Trustees of WH and thereafter at agreed intervals.

36. The intention of both parties is to create an alliance for the long-term, hence the expectation would be that the review procedure would not call in question the basics of the association. However since two charitable bodies are involved a necessary safeguard must be to protect the freedom of action of each in pursuance of its responsibilities. It is important therefore that the link between WH and UOB must be capable of being ended with minimum consequences in the (hopefully unlikely) situation that the alliance ceases to be mutually advantageous or external circumstances make it counter-productive.
37. At this stage the biggest difficulty in this area would appear to be the position of staff transferred within the alliance or appointed by the JDC.

VII MATTERS TO BE ADDRESSED

38. The first task is for WH and UOB to reach agreement on the broad implementation of a strategic alliance as sketched in this paper and the earlier exchanges of material. WH would propose that a joint meeting be held at senior level in the very near future to forward the matter.
39. At that meeting it will be necessary to put in hand detailed discussions of a number of crucial and immediate issues. These include:
- (i) approach to the Funding Council;
 - (ii) constitution of the Board of Management;
 - (iii) curriculum;
 - (iv) lifelong learning;
 - (v) staffing;

There will undoubtedly be others.

40. It may also be desirable to initiate discussions on possible economies which could result from an alliance. Although decisions here cannot be implemented at once it is important to attempt to have some economies at least in place in time for the financial year 1999-2000. The approach to the Funding Council may lead to discussions on financial matters.
41. WH has papers prepared or in preparation on the above.

EWI/JHYB
9.9.98

Strategic Alliance between the University of Birmingham and Westhill College

Structures and Administrative Processes

Alliance

1. Westhill College and the University of Birmingham have agreed to form, jointly, a strategic alliance. This strategic alliance will consist of jointly agreed academic plans for Westhill College with associated financial, managerial and business plans, linked to the University of Birmingham plans.
2. The alliance has the support and endorsement of the Higher Education Funding Council for England and the Teacher Training Agency. The objective of the alliance is to enhance the ways through which higher education can be delivered, and to maximise the use of the assets, human, physical and financial, that are available to the two institutions.
3. The alliance is seen as an evolutionary process, in which the administrative arrangements and relationships may change alongside the academic and business objectives. Arrangements shall be made for periodic review by both University of Birmingham and Westhill College.
4. Through the strategic alliance, Westhill College shall become a College of the University of Birmingham, with a separate identity but linked through the agreement and through appropriate joint structures.
5. The formation of the alliance shall respect the distinct characters of both Westhill College and University of Birmingham.

Purpose

6. The purposes of the alliance shall be:-

For University of Birmingham:-

- a) to provide further opportunities and facilities for greater access to higher education for non-traditional and under-represented groups, particularly in the West Midlands region.
- b) to provide for a wider provision of part-time programmes, and for enhanced continuing education programmes.
- c) to provide a focus for wider continuing professional development programmes at all levels.
- d) to enable possible new developments to take place which might be appropriate within the context of the strategic alliance

For Westhill College:

a) to provide financial stability for the future for the College, and certainty for its staff and students.

b) to provide a pathway for the further development and diversity of higher education activity at the College.

7. The mechanism of the strategic alliance shall subsume the current accreditation arrangements between Westhill College and the University of Birmingham. The academic work of the College shall therefore derive directly from the authority of the University Senate and the degree awarding status of the University of Birmingham. The activities of teacher training and certificate, diploma and degree programmes (and other awards) currently delivered by Westhill College through the accreditation arrangements shall continue under the new mechanism.

Identity

8. Westhill College shall retain a separate identity within the joint framework of the strategic alliance with University of Birmingham providing continuity with its history and role. The title of "Westhill College, University of Birmingham" would reflect this although it is a working title which could be reviewed. Further discussion of the external relations and marketing strategy will be required.

Westhill College Trustees

9. The importance of the Trustees in the relationship between Westhill College and University of Birmingham is recognised. The Trustees have a responsibility to ensure that the requirements of their Trust Deed are met in the joint arrangements, and that the distinctive ethos of Westhill College is reflected in its future activities.

10. It is clear to both parties that the future development and perhaps the continued existence of the College will depend upon the widening of the provisions of the Trust Deed to allow a broader range of higher education activities at the College. Without this, the strategic alliance cannot meet its objectives.

11. A seat on the Council of the University of Birmingham shall be made available for a member of the Westhill College Trustees for as long as the strategic alliance remains in force.

Selly Oak Colleges Endowment Trust

12. It is recognised that, at least through the legal arrangements for the holding of land and buildings, the Trustees of Selly Oak Colleges Endowment Trust also have an interest in the formation of a strategic alliance between Westhill College and the University of Birmingham. This interest should be recognised and addressed in the context of the general development of the strategic alliance.

Administrative Arrangements with the Higher Education Funding Council for England and the Teacher Training Agency

13. It is agreed that the Higher Education Funding Council for England shall be the lead body for accounting purposes for both University of Birmingham and Westhill College. This will enable a single line of accountability and a single audit process to be effective for both institutions and for the joint processes that will come into being through the strategic alliance.

14. For funding and accountability purposes, there shall be a single Financial Memorandum between the University of Birmingham and the Higher Education Funding Council for England covering the activities of both Institutions, and reflecting the Institutional Plans of both. The Vice Chancellor of the University of Birmingham shall be the Designated Officer for accounting purposes for both the University of Birmingham and Westhill College including the joint activities developed through the strategic alliance. Through arrangements to be developed with the Higher Education Funding Council for England, there shall be separate identification of the components of the Block Grant and other funds, of the MASN and the Student Contract numbers for the University and the College.

15. Further discussions will be needed about the representation of the activities of the University and the College in the statistical returns that are required, recognising the interests of the Trustees of Westhill College.

16. Further discussion will be needed to determine the mechanisms for funding for Westhill College from the Teacher Training Agency with a view to ensuring that this is consistent with the objects of the strategic alliance.

Administrative Arrangements for Academic Programmes between Westhill College and the University of Birmingham

17. Through the strategic alliance, Westhill College and its staff shall work within the powers and the quality control and assurance processes of the Senate and the Academic Board in a similar way to existing staff of the University. This will subsume the current accreditation process. It follows, in order to assure quality, that Westhill College should adopt common procedures for academic management alongside those current within the University of Birmingham.

18. Further discussion of the procedures for the registration, representation and discipline of students is needed.

Administrative Arrangements to under-pin the strategic alliance.

19. Jointly, the Council of the University of Birmingham and the Trustees of Westhill College shall form a Company, limited by guarantee, to be the vehicle for managing the strategic alliance. The Board of Management of the Company shall reflect the interests of the two institutions in the alliance. The detailed constitution of the Board of Management will need to be determined by discussion.

20. The Company will enable the Trustees to meet their obligations under the Trust Deed, and will provide a mechanism to meet the agreed objectives of the strategic alliance.

21. Joint plans for academic and other activities at Westhill College and the financial and management plans to under-pin them shall be agreed through the Board of Management of the Company.

22. The necessary assets of Westhill College to achieve the jointly agreed academic and business plans shall be made available by the Trustees of Westhill College to the alliance. It is not envisaged at least initially that the Company should trade in commercial terms, or that it should employ staff. It will be a vehicle whereby the Trustees and the University Council can jointly exercise their governance responsibilities for the alliance.

23. It is agreed that the Principal of Westhill College shall become a Pro-Vice Chancellor of the University of Birmingham, and shall be a member *ex-officio* of the Senate, Strategy, Planning and Resources Committee and the Council of the University of Birmingham.

24. The Principal of Westhill College shall be the chief academic and administrative officer of Westhill College, within the framework agreed jointly through the Company, the University Senate and Council, and subject to overall responsibility to the Vice Chancellor as a Pro-Vice Chancellor.

25. Whereever possible in the interests of simplicity and efficiency, Westhill College and the University of Birmingham shall adopt common systems and administrative processes, relying upon the University of Birmingham administrative departments and avoiding duplication. Arrangements shall be made for an administrative presence to be provided at the Westhill College campus to support staff and students working there.

26. The University of Birmingham has offered to take over the employment of the staff of Westhill College, recognising that TUPE would apply. Common terms and conditions for all of the staff of the University and the College could be of benefit when the objectives of academic development may require flexible working across both institutions. Further discussion will be needed to determine the most satisfactory way forward in this area. Discussion will also be required to determine the best mechanism for the representation of staff in Westhill College. Decisions in this area may influence pension arrangements, and further consideration may be needed to resolve these.

27. Discussions will be required between the Guilds of Students of Westhill College and the University of Birmingham to determine the best structure for the support of students in the light of the arrangements agreed by their parent institutions. It should be noted that, in advance of agreement, the Guild of the University of Birmingham has agreed that Westhill College students may have access to the facilities at Edgbaston.

Westhill Court

28. There may be a need for a Court for Westhill College to provide an annual advisory, promotional and networking forum, linking the College to its various stakeholders in a way that the University Court may not be able to do in a clear way. This is part of preserving a separate but linked identity for Westhill College. The constitution for such a body would require careful consideration to avoid possible contention with the University Court in matters of joint interest.

Sunset Provisions

29. In the unlikely event that either party should wish to withdraw from the alliance, at least five years' notice will need to be given in order fully to safeguard the interests of staff and students. Discussions will take place with a view to devising mechanisms to enable the Trustees to continue to operate the College in the event of the University giving notice of withdrawal.

Next Steps

30. If the alliance is to take effect from August 1999 and maximum advantage obtained from the current Government policy to widen participation in further and higher education, early agreement will be needed on an academic and business plan. The necessary structures can then be put in place to support these plans and a critical path determined.

DRW/DJA
21.10.1998
Version 2

Appendix 4

WIDENING PARTICIPATION: SPECIAL FUNDING PROGRAMME 1998/99

WESTHILL COLLEGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ENGLAND: BID FOR PROJECT FUNDING : NEW SITES OF LEARNING; UNDER-REPRESENTATION OF MUSLIM WOMEN

Preamble

We applaud the determination of the Funding Council to establish the extent of under-representation in higher education of particular sections of society. We would suggest that our own experience and that of others indicates that a considerable amount is known already. For example, it is widely known that African-Caribbean men are under-represented in higher education. So too are disaffected young men from low socio-economic groups. There is also evidence of under-representation among Muslim women from certain communities. It is the need of this latter group that this bid seeks in particular to address.

Both because of their own preference and because of family pressures, some Muslim women wish to study in female only environments. This is particularly, but not solely, true in the case of certain groups of Bangladeshi and Pakistani women. There is evidence in Birmingham, as in some other cities, of the virtual disappearance from the education system of women from these communities once they reach their teens. In other cases, there is evidence of women being unwilling to study either at any distance from home or in a mixed environment. The City has sought to cater for the wishes of these groups by maintaining a number of single sex girls' schools. In their turn, further education institutions have been active in providing education opportunities in a single gender environment. There is now a need for progression opportunities and for increased educational opportunities to be made available for older women in these communities.

The Project Partners

The bidding partnership comprises the University of Central England (UCE) and Westhill College of Higher Education (WH), which is the lead institution for submitting and managing the financial aspects of the project. The allocation of delivery activity and HEFCE funds will be in a ratio of 3/5ths to 2/5ths for UCE and WH respectively. The funding allocation will reflect the volume of activity undertaken by each HEI.

Activity

The newly-created City College, Birmingham has a well-established Women's Academy with 170 students and European funding to extend the accommodation. South Birmingham College has access to a number of venues, including use of the Muath Welfare Trust's premises. The latter is a large Muslim community organisation which already works with College partners to provide education for women. These two main locations are on opposite sides of Birmingham in the heart of Muslim communities, and represent facilities that will be used to deliver the programmes associated with UCE.

The Westhill contribution to the project will be centred on a series of pilot studies of a 'Dynamic Curriculum' Model. This involves developmental work arising from access projects, adult education and new systems of 'open learning' and has identified a need to review HE curricula in terms of content as well as modes of delivery. As in other recent approaches to HE curriculum development, the emphasis is on learning rather than teaching and the individual's responsibility for learning.

The intention of this part of the project is to develop and test a 'dynamic curriculum' model, which recognises innovative learning in practice, and how different sites of learning influence what is learned and how it is learned as well as where the learning takes place. The case studies will generate three separate but related project data sets, which will be used to assess the feasibility, validity and costs of the model, for possible wider use. Community learning partnerships and local employers will be involved, where feasible.

The proposed case studies are:

- (a) A joint project led by Westhill College, with the Hindu Women's Network and East Birmingham College, to recognise the "Women's Academy" as a site for access and opportunity in HE. A range of progression opportunities from the existing A level and GNVQ qualifications will be developed, and joint curriculum delivery between Westhill College of HE and East Birmingham FE College will be piloted. The existing Westhill Islamic Learning programme, which supports progression from FE to HE, will be reshaped for women only.
- (b) A joint project led by Westhill College, with the Golden Hillock Mosque. Golden Hillock currently provides: an employment centre utilising Koranic languages and languages of the sub-continent; a supplementary school; hospital and prison visiting and community development and support services in housing and health. The cultural and linguistic capacities of the Golden Hillock Islamic community will be placed at the centre of a "capacity building" scheme aimed at recognising and developing the understanding and skills of those providing the community's services (described above). A series of courses will be provided, focussed on learning skills which will include HE outcomes and lead to credit recognised by the University of Birmingham and UCE probably at Level 1.
- (c) A joint project lead by Westhill College, with the Hindu Council of Birmingham where the problems and issues of developing and managing community resources will be tested, and learning achievements recognised. The focus of the project will be on the development of a learning programme to meet the needs of the professional and voluntary managers of a community temple project (costing approximately £6m and opening in 1998). A significant population of Hindu residents will be offered an opportunity to acquire self-development and managerial skills.

The outcome of the projects will be (i) a number of students from traditionally excluded backgrounds will be given access to HE and (ii) evaluation of the case studies by the partners will indicate the effectiveness of this model for future work across the region in faith communities, and possibly for a range of other groups who do not currently access HE.

1. Project Aims

In collaboration with its partners, WH and UCE wish to:

- 1.1 investigate the demand for single-sex higher education among Muslim women;
- 1.2 develop and pilot programmes which can be provided in single sex environments within the framework of a 'dynamic curriculum';
- 1.3 design partnership arrangements which will draw upon the opportunities offered by part-time, distance, community-centred methods of provision and modes of delivery and which sponsor credit transfer between and within the partnership FE and HE institutions.

2. Evidence of Need and Work Programme

2.1 Evidence of Need

The preamble to this bid has alluded to the point that under-representation in HE may indicate need within defined social, gender and faith communities but that there is evidence of this failing to be translated into demand. We would go further at this point and argue that our task is to generate demand and that the proposed project cannot simply quantify demand which is pre-existing and pre-defined. The critical objective addressed by the project is to engage in action research which both identifies and shapes demand for progression to HE, simultaneously.

The following data gathered from the Institute of Employment Research, University of Warwick and the Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations is relevant to the analysis of need in relation to the partnership FE institutions with whom provision will be piloted.

Overall, 115.5 thousand students were enrolled in the 14 FE colleges in Birmingham during the academic year 1996-7, 52.9 per cent of whom were female. The following data sets are given in respect of the Partner colleges involved in this project.

Table 1.1: Number of Students by College

College	Students	Male	Female	Part-time	Full-time	% Female	% Part-time
East Birmingham	7833	4297	3536	6210	1623	45.1	79.3
Handsworth	14273	6823	7450	12224	2049	52.2	85.6
South Birmingham	15450	7177	8273	11395	4055	53.5	73.8

Table 1.2: Age, sex and full or part-time status of students

Age Group	Male		Female		All		% of Part-Time	% of Full-Time	% of Students
	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time			
19-24	6659	2498	7614	3100	14273	5598	16.4	20.6	17.4
25-34	12762	1181	14175	2183	26937	3364	31.0	12.4	26.6
35-44	9399	589	10451	1225	19830	1814	22.8	6.7	19.0
45-54	5513	294	5849	439	11362	733	13.1	2.7	10.6

Table 1.3: Age breakdown of students by college

College	All students	Aged 16-18	Aged 19-24	Aged 25 and Over	% 16-18	% 19-24	% 25 and over
East Birmingham College	7865	1305	1295	5125	16.7	16.6	65.6
Handsworth College	14234	1946	2333	9686	13.7	17.8	68.1
South Birmingham College	15204	2465	2352	9504	16.2	15.7	62.5

Table 1.4 presents the broad ethnic breakdown of students enrolled at further education colleges in Birmingham and Solihull. Overall, nearly 34 thousand (29.2 per cent) were from minority ethnic groups, the majority of whom were from the three South Asian ethnic groups (Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi), most of the remainder being from one of the Black ethnic groups (Black-Caribbean, Black-African or Black-Other).

Table 1.4: Ethnic composition of students by college

College	Number of students			Percentage of students by broad ethnic group			
	All	White	Minority Ethnic Groups	All minority Ethnic Groups	Black	South Asian	Chinese and "Other"
East Birmingham College	7833	4849	2163	27.6	8.7	15.9	3.0
Handsworth College	14273	5824	7574	53.1	18.3	29.7	5.0
South Birmingham College	15450	7837	6130	39.7	7.1	27.4	5.2

Contrasts in the characteristics of students by ethnic group are summarised in Table 1.5. The female share of students was greatest in the Chinese and Black-Caribbean ethnic groups and smallest in the Pakistani and Black-African ethnic groups. Nearly four-fifths of white students were studying part-time. Among minority ethnic groups, two-thirds were studying part-time, with black students most likely to be studying part-time (notably Black-Caribbean and Black-African students), while two-thirds of Indian students were studying part-time.

Table 1.5: Characteristics of students by ethnic group

	All Students	Male	Female	Part-time	Full-time	Aged 16-18	Aged 19-24	Aged 25 and over
White	72150	47.8	52.2	79.4	20.6	17.9	16.8	63.7
Minority ethnic groups	33733	43.5	56.5	66.5	33.5	27.4	19.0	50.9
Indian	7983	43.2	56.8	68.3	31.7	29.6	16.2	49.3
Pakistani	9629	48.0	52.0	61.8	38.2	36.2	22.9	38.7
Bangladeshi	1595	50.7	49.3	56.2	43.8	38.8	22.1	36.9
All ethnic groups	115454	47.1	52.9	76.4	23.6	19.9	17.2	60.5

Participation rates

Table 2.1 presents the overall participation rates for males, females by broad age group for Birmingham, Solihull and the two boroughs taken together. Around an eighth of 19 to 24 year olds were students at the 14 colleges, but women in this age group were much more likely to be students than men, less than a tenth of whom were attending further education colleges. The higher participation rates of women relative to men are maintained in all older age groups. Participation rates decline with age, more slowly for women than for men.

Table 2.1: Percentage of population enrolled in Birmingham and Solihull colleges by age and sex

Age Group	Birmingham			Solihull			Birmingham and Solihull		
	Males	Females	All	Males	Females	All	Males	Females	All
All ages	5.1	6.7	5.9	4.9	7.1	6.0	5.1	6.8	5.9
16-18	33.8	34.8	34.3	45.0	50.6	47.6	35.4	37.0	36.2
19-24	9.9	13.6	11.7	9.4	13.4	11.3	9.8	13.5	11.6

Evidence drawn from the widening participation data includes:

- The desirability from the students' point of view of part-time provision.
- The share of full-time students participating in partner colleges declined steadily with age; older women are studying mainly part-time.
- Opportunities for older members of minority ethnic and faith groups exist but are not taken up in the same proportions as for white and Chinese and Black-Caribbean people.
- In Birmingham, the largest single ethnic minority group among students is the 9,500 Pakistani population; mature women within this particular population we suspect are poorly represented since in relation to white people to minority ethnic groups the population of Pakistani students is smaller.
- People from minority ethnic groups particularly Black-Caribbean and Pakistani people are more likely to attend local colleges than white people supporting the view that local learning communities are of vital significance.
- Women from certain ethnic groups between the ages of 16 and 24 tend to 'disappear' from participation in the preparatory stages of progression to HE.
- Pakistani and Bangladeshi people have amongst the lowest levels of participation in FE at the older age levels.

2.2 Research Phase: January - March 1999

2.3 Programme Development: March - December 1999

2.4 Delivery Development: September 1999 onwards

3. Project Management

3.1 Steering Committee:

Deputy Principal, WH (Chair)

Director of Academic Quality and Support Department, UCE (Deputy Chair)

Director of Lifelong Learning, WH

College representatives of local FE colleges

Representatives from partner organisations such as the Muath Welfare Trust

Project Managers (x2)

Director of Centre for Research into Quality, UCE

3.2 Project Team

Project Managers*

Research staff from the Centre for Research into Quality, UCE
Staff seconded from City College, Birmingham and South Birmingham
College

* Project Managers (who will be appointed from the staff of UCE and of WH or one of the partner colleges or community organisations collaborating in the project) ideally will be women. The persons appointed will have an understanding of and sympathy with the needs and beliefs of Muslim women.

Programme development and delivery mechanisms will as far as possible seek to build upon the HEI's and their partner colleges' existing arrangements for collaborative provision. Thus the project is designed to concentrate upon programmes and delivery mechanisms geared specifically to the needs of the target group. Funds derived from the core activities will be available however to support a proportion of the development and delivery costs for these programmes and staff of the HEI's and Colleges, with guidance and support from the project team, will contribute to the project.

3.3 Project Management Structure

3.3.1 Management Structure

The Project team, under the leadership of the WH and UCE Project Managers, will be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the project and will submit regular progress reports to the Steering Committee during the research, programme development and delivery development phases. The Steering Committee will be responsible for the establishment of mechanisms to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes and will be chaired by the Deputy Principal of WH representing the lead HEI with an alternate and Deputy chair provided by UCE as indicated in 3.1 above.

3.3.2 Communications and Meetings

The Project team will meet fortnightly throughout 1999. The frequency of meetings subsequently when partnership arrangements for delivery are being finalised will be determined in the light of experience of the task.

The Steering Committee will meet at least four times during 1999 and more frequently in the last quarter if deemed necessary. It will continue to meet in 2000 as necessary.

3.3.3 Work Programme

See timescale set out in 2 above.

3.4 Evaluation, Monitoring and Dissemination

These pilot studies and delivery projects will be carefully evaluated as part of the respective UCE and Westhill/University of Birmingham overall strategies for the development of responsive and widened participation. In both cases a formal evaluation report will be submitted to the Project Steering Group. UCE will appoint a Senior Researcher who will be capable of directing the evaluation report on behalf of both HE institutions.

Monitoring of progress and results and their dissemination will be the responsibility of the respective project managers in both bidding institutions. Within WH, programme development will also be within the remit given to the project manager for the College's pilot studies and projects.

Dissemination will be through formal project reports on progress, through a quarterly project bulletin distributed through the FE and HE regional networks and placed on the WH and UCE internet web sites and via a publication on "New Learning Communities - towards the dynamic curriculum", which will be, it is anticipated, a substantial monograph on this theme.

4. Meeting National and Regional Criteria

4.1 National Criteria

4.1.1 Meets a clear need

The under-representation of Muslim women from certain communities is well established. This project aims to build upon the success of women-only education at school and FE level by providing progression to HE.

4.1.2 Promotes a longer term commitment to widening participation

In addition to the above aims, the project seeks to establish and extend a framework of partnerships, procedures and systems to ensure a long-term commitment to promoting HE and meeting the demands of the target group in the future.

4.1.3 Develops synergy with other funding sources and partnerships

UCE, WH and their local partner FE Colleges are active and committed partners in many local and regional initiatives and partnerships including:

Widening Participation: the Birmingham and Solihull Partnership

The Birmingham Lifelong Learning Forum

The West Midlands HE/TEC Network

The Birmingham Education Business Partnership

A local and regional network of associated and accredited Colleges of UCE

The University of Birmingham and Westhill College Alliance.

The HEI's and Colleges work very closely with local communities and local authorities and have a significant level of experience in gaining funding in partnership with others. The partners are also very active in the delivery of EC structural funded projects.

4.2 Regional Criteria

The proposal specifically targets one regional criterion:

"Community project which will address known priority areas for widening access in the region"

It also contributes to a second regional criterion:

"Feasibility studies, considering whether it is possible to replicate successful projects in widening participation in different areas and/or on a wider scale"

It will contribute to the second of the above criteria through the mechanism of the regional HEI Widening Participation Network of which both HE partners are members.

5. Funding Sought

UCE

5.1 Establish the level of demand for HE from the targeted community:

Staff:

Senior Researcher	8850.00
Research Assistant	4425.00
Travel Subsidence	500.00
Consumables	<u>500.00</u>
	14275.00

5.2 Devise and develop programmes of study to satisfy the demands established. It is expected that development work will continue into early 2000 so that programmes can be offered from September 2000.

Programme Development Staff	10000.00
Consumables	<u>725.00</u>
	10725.00

5.3 Establish a framework of partnerships, procedures and systems to ensure a long-term commitment to promoting HE and meeting the demands of the target groups in the future.

Development Staff	<u>5000.00</u>
TOTAL	30000.00

Westhill College of Higher Education

5.4 Staff

Researcher	5000.00
Travel Subsistence	500.00
Consumables	<u>500.00</u>
	6000.00

5.5 Programme Development

Staff	10000.00
Consumables	1000.00
Travel Subsistence	<u>1000.00</u>
	12000.00

5.6 Materials Development and Accreditation

2000.00

TOTAL 20000.00

5.7 Overall project total

£50,000.00

Proposal for widening Participation -Cover Sheet

Lead Institution: Westhill College of Higher Education

Title of Proposal: New Sites of Learning: Women-friendly higher education for Muslims

Objectives of Proposal: Increasing the participation of Minority Ethnic and Muslim Women in HE through the use of a dynamic curriculum model of learning

Funding sought from the Council: £50000.00

	UCE	WH
Salary Costs:	28275.00	15000.00
Travel and Subsistence	1725.00	3000.00
Other (Materials and Accreditation)		2000.00
Indirect costs		
Sub-Total	30000.00	20000.00
Total		£50,000.00

Timescale over which funding is sought: from January 1999 to December 1999

Partners: City College Birmingham, South Birmingham College and Muslim Community organisations.

Contact name and address at lead institution:

Dr David Davies
Deputy Principal
Westhill College of Higher Education
Weoley Park Road
Selly Oak
West Midlands B29 6LL

Telephone Number: 0121-475 7245

email: d.davies@westhill.ac.uk

Signature of head of institution (or representative):

Name and Position:

David Davies Deputy Principal

Invitation

Widening
participation:
special funding
programme
1998-99

Widening participation: special funding programme 1998-99

To	Heads of HEFCE-funded higher education institutions
Of interest to those responsible for	Access, collaboration, learning and teaching strategy
Reference	98/35
Publication date	June 1998
Enquiries to	Yvonne Perry tel 0117 931 7233 e-mail y.perry@hefce.ac.uk Emma Koiston tel 0117 931 7107 e-mail e.koiston@hefce.ac.uk Wendy Rigby tel 0117 931 7324 e-mail w.rigby@hefce.ac.uk

Executive Summary

Purpose

This document invites proposals for funding in 1998-99 to help widen participation in higher education.

Key points

1. We have allocated £1.5 million in 1998-99 to this initiative, which focuses on building partnerships between higher education institutions (HEIs) and other organisations.
2. HEIs funded by the HEFCE are eligible to bid for funds. Further education colleges and other organisations may be included in collaborative proposals led by an HEI.
3. We will allocate the funds regionally, to support partnerships which can address low demand from under-represented groups by encouraging progression into and within higher education. We encourage institutions to work together, and with other organisations in the region, to develop either a single, combined proposal or a suite of collaborative proposals.
4. Partnership proposals should respond to a clear regional or local need, and promote longer-term institutional commitment to widening participation. They should also address regional priorities. These priorities are being identified at our regional seminars in July. We will confirm the regional priorities to institutions by the end of July.

Action required

5. Institutions should send copies of proposals to Emma Koiston at the HEFCE to arrive no later than Wednesday 23 September 1998. We will announce the outcome in December 1998.

Background

6. There is an accepted need to increase the participation in HE of students from under-represented groups, particularly from lower socio-economic groups, both for higher education to play a greater role in increasing social equity in the United Kingdom, and to use the talents of its people better.
7. The HEFCE's new standing committee on Equal Opportunities, Access and Lifelong Learning (EQUALL) is advising us on developing a longer-term funding strategy to encourage wider participation in HE. In anticipation of this strategy, we are running a special funding programme for 1998-99, concentrating on building partnerships and disseminating and promoting good practice.
8. The programme will help to lay the foundations for effective institutional strategies in the future, and to initiate activities for development in 1999-2000 and beyond.

Aims and principles

9. Our aim is to enable HEIs to build partnerships with other organisations to widen participation in higher education.
10. We want to encourage HEIs to play a more active role in stimulating demand for HE from under-represented groups. Many of the causes of low participation from disadvantaged groups fall outside the HE sector. Within these groups demand from suitably qualified entrants or those with the ability to benefit, is currently limited. The reasons for this include low expectations and low attainment levels, with consequent low rates of progression to HE.
11. There are opportunities for HEIs to raise expectations and improve attainment and progression rates, by working in partnership with other organisations, such as schools, further education colleges, employers and community development bodies. These partnerships can address low demand by stimulating and facilitating progression into and within higher education.

12. The regional and local aspects of widening participation are crucial. Most collaborations between HEIs and other partners take place within a region, reflecting the relative lack of mobility of under-represented groups. Many other sources of funding are also targeted regionally. Some of these have similar themes – for example, the FEFC's Strategic Partnership Fund, the Government's Single Regeneration Budget and European Union Funding – which provide an opportunity for synergies between Council funding and other programmes.

Scope and funding

13. Institutions themselves will wish to determine the focus of the partnerships. There is already significant experience in seeking to widen participation in all sectors of education and training, much of which reflects regional diversity. Some areas have made considerable progress in developing regional and local strategies. We aim to work with these strategies, as well as within our own national strategy, to achieve the most benefit with the funding available.

14. We have allocated a total of £1.5 million in 1998-99 to this initiative, divided among nine regions according to need. We have measured need by the number of young people from poor neighbourhoods in each region who do not enter higher education. This definition draws upon research by the HEFCE's Statistical Unit, which describes students' backgrounds by neighbourhood type rather than socio-economic group. The initiative, however, is aimed at all age groups and not only young people.

15. The funds available in 1998-99 for each region are shown at Annex A. We expect to increase funding for the widening participation programme in future years.

16. Since the amount of money to be allocated in 1998-99 is quite small, we believe that it might best be used to help establish or consolidate a strategic approach. This could involve regions, subject areas, institutions or other groupings. The aim would be to build a framework within which future projects

would be more effective. We would encourage HEIs and other stakeholders within regions to reduce the competitive aspect of bidding as far as possible, and to work together to produce either a combined project or a suite of projects that complement one another.

Strategic approach

17. A strategic approach might include elements such as analysing need, developing partnerships, and building capacity.

Analysing need

18. To develop effective strategies in the longer term, we need to understand the nature of low participation of particular groups in any area, and what is currently constraining growth in participation. It is also important to understand the nature and extent of existing partnerships that are effective. Projects might involve:

- analysing local need
- examining existing initiatives and target groups
- mapping existing partnerships
- identifying gaps in practices and partnerships.

Developing partnerships

19. Partnerships are an important mechanism for sharing expertise, particularly across different education and business sectors. Where they operate informally, they might benefit from a higher profile, which could encourage a more systematic approach to learning from the experiences of others. Partnerships often help to promote and embed successful practice. Projects might involve:

- evaluating effective partnerships
- setting objectives and priorities for partnerships
- outlining plans and strategies for regional or local activity
- establishing responsibilities, timescales and targets.

Building capacity

20. Partnerships might consider how they can help to promote HE to a wider community and how they can develop staff in HE to manage the demands of

a more diverse student body. Projects might involve:

- building and developing the role of partnerships
- developing staff awareness of and commitment to widening participation
- identifying resources, both within and outside HEIs
- establishing mechanisms for monitoring and measuring progress.

Criteria and Priorities

National criteria

21. Each bid will need to satisfy the following national criteria. These are threshold criteria, necessary but not sufficient for the success of a proposal.

Meet a clear need

22. Institutions should demonstrate that a particular need exists in the region or locally and show how their proposal will help to meet this need. They should specify the outcomes that they will measure to assess the effectiveness of their project.

Promote longer-term commitment to widening participation

23. Proposals should show how the funding sought will promote longer-term commitment to widening participation.

Develop synergy with other funding sources and partnerships

24. Institutions should identify other relevant funding sources and partnerships that exist in the area, and state how their proposal links to and builds upon these networks.

Regional priorities

25. In addition to threshold national criteria, each proposal will need to address regional priorities. These priorities may differ from region to region. We are consulting with institutions and other bodies to identify the priorities relevant to their region, through a series of regional seminars.

26. We will confirm the regional priorities to institutions by the end of July.

Assessment

27. The HEFCE's Regional Consultants have set up regional advisory networks, or other groups of key players involved in regional strategies for widening participation. These will assess the proposals and advise the HEFCE Board.

Bidding rules

28. HEIs directly funded by the Council are eligible to submit proposals. As indicated above (paragraph 16), we hope that institutions and others will reduce the competitive element of bidding for funds. We are seeking collaborative proposals: these may be a single, combined proposal from institutions and other stakeholders in a region, or a suite of linked proposals.

29. There must be a lead HEI for all bids to ensure clear lines of accountability for the use of funds. Further education colleges and other organisations may be included in collaborative proposals led by an HEI.

30. All activities in a proposal must satisfy the threshold national criteria and address the regional priorities.

Monitoring

31. We will ask institutions to provide information about progress in achieving their objectives and we may audit the extent to which institutions have implemented their proposals.

Application Process

32. Proposals should be no more than four sides of A4 plus a cover sheet, except where a Regional Consultant requests additional information. If submitting hard copy we require 6 copies of each proposal and cover sheet. A template for the cover sheet is at Annex B.

Timetable

33. Institutions should post hard copies of proposals to Emma Koiston, HEFCE, Northavon House, Coldharbour Lane, Bristol BS16 1QD, to arrive no later than 23 September 1998. We will accept proposals by facsimile or e-mail. If using e-mail the format used should be either .TXT, .RTF, Word 97 or earlier, or WordPerfect 5.1 or earlier.

34. The relevant regional advisory network or other group will assess the proposals and advise the HEFCE Board in December 1998.

35. We will announce the outcome in December 1998 so that partnerships can begin to implement their proposals in January 1999. Institutions will have until to 31 December 1999 to use the funds.

Annex A

Regional distribution of funds 1998-99

Region	£
North-East	156,000
North-West	212,000
Merseyside	86,000
Yorkshire and Humberside	210,000
East Midlands	126,000
West Midlands	206,000
Eastern	96,000
London	195,000
South-East	117,000
South-West	96,000

Annex B

Proposal for widening participation

Cover sheet

Lead institution

Title of proposal

Objectives of proposal

.....

.....

£

Funding sought from the Council: Salary costs

Travel and subsistence

Other (e.g. survey costs-please specify)

Indirect costs

Total

Timescale over which funding is sought: from (month) 1999 to (month) 1999

Partners

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Contact name and address at lead institution

.....

.....

.....

Telephone number E-mail address

Signature of head of institution (or representative)¹

Name and position

¹ If providing proposal by e-mail please provide typed confirmation that the Vice Chancellor supports the application.

Higher Education Funding Council for England
Northavon House
Coldharbour Lane
BRISTOL
BS16 1QD

Tel 0117 931 7317
Fax 0117 931 7203
WWW <http://www.hefce.ac.uk>

Widening participation in higher education: funding proposals

Widening participation in higher education: funding proposals

To	Heads of HEFCE-funded institutions Heads of DENI-funded universities Heads of FE colleges that receive HEFCE funds
Of interest to those responsible for	Planning, Finance, Recruitment, Equal Opportunities and Access
Reference	98/39
Publication date	August 1998
Enquiries to	Nicola Dowds tel 0117 931 7471 e-mail n.dowds@hefce.ac.uk

Executive summary

Purpose

1. We plan to introduce new funding arrangements in 1999-2000 to encourage institutions to widen participation in higher education. This paper invites comments on our broad strategy for widening participation and our related funding proposals.

Key points

2. We propose a strategy which encourages institutions to increase the participation of under-represented groups and to ensure that such students succeed. We will also encourage collaboration between higher education institutions (HEIs) and other education sectors, to tackle the problems of poor progression rates.

3. We recognise diversity in institutional approach to widening participation, and acknowledge that many HE institutions have strong track records in this area. We expect new funding to lead to an overall improvement in the representation and retention of specific groups in HE; and this will be achieved by recognising the costs of existing activity and by new initiatives. We would expect institutions to set improvement targets, and to monitor performance against them.

4. We propose a combination of funding approaches, through the mainstream teaching funding method, the allocation of additional student numbers, and special funding initiatives. The balance would lie more towards mainstream funding, through additional funds for disabled students and students from poor backgrounds, and the allocation of additional student numbers to widen participation.

5. We propose to encourage institutions to develop coherent strategies for the recruitment and progression of students, particularly those from under-represented groups, by relating our funding to such strategies.

6. We would like to spend up to £30 million to support both mainstream and special funding proposals in 1999-2000 but this will depend in part on the details of the additional resources which the Government has provided following the Comprehensive Spending Review. Final funding decisions will be made in December, following this consultation and the more detailed announcement of Government expenditure plans for HE in 1999-2000 and beyond, to be made in the autumn.

Action required

7. Issues for consultation are highlighted throughout the text and summarised in paragraph 53. Please send any comments on these proposals to Nicola Dowds by Monday 2 November 1998.

Background

8. Since its establishment the HEFCE has been committed to widening participation in higher education. More recently, in the light of the emphasis given to widening participation in the Dearing report, and its central importance to the Government's lifelong learning policy, this has become a major priority for the HE agenda.

9. We have established an advisory committee on Equal Opportunities, Access and Lifelong Learning (EQUALL), chaired by Dr David Fussey, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Greenwich.

10. Following advice from the EQUALL Committee, initial proposals on how we could encourage institutions to widen participation were discussed at our Annual Conference in April 1998 and in regional seminars throughout June and July. These discussions have informed the proposals outlined here for consultation.

Issues and principles

11. Higher education institutions (HEIs) have achieved a great deal in the last few years in terms of widening the profile of the student population. HE is a far more inclusive activity than it was. For example, women now account for a majority of HE students, whereas 20 years ago they represented one-third. Students from ethnic minority backgrounds, taken together, are well represented (although some groups, such as Moslem women and young black Caribbean men, are still significantly under-represented). And there is now a well established tradition of participation in HE by mature students.

12. However, much remains to be done to increase the participation of certain groups who continue to be under-represented. Our research shows that young people from the wealthiest backgrounds are 12 times more likely to enter HE than those from the poorest backgrounds¹. This is based on analysis which marries postcodes with information from the census and other surveys, including surveys on family income.

13. We can play a significant role in encouraging institutions to widen participation further, primarily through funding incentives. However, in doing so we must be careful to avoid potential problems and unintended consequences. In particular:

- a. The options open to the Council are on the supply side. However, the main problem is one of demand, and in particular the availability of qualified students from disadvantaged groups. HEIs have an important role to play: they can take action to widen the population from which they recruit students; and they can also link with schools, FE colleges and community groups to raise expectations and improve attainment rates among those young people with the potential to benefit from HE.
- b. We know that different institutions have very different profiles of social mix in their student populations - and we will soon share this information with individual institutions. We also know that there is a correlation between social class and success at 18 years in level three qualifications (A-levels and their equivalents). We must be careful not to penalise institutions for failing to be socially inclusive simply because they have particular entry requirements. On the other hand, it appears that institutions could do more to recruit appropriately qualified students from poor backgrounds. That they do not do so now may be due to either inadequate information and advice to students, or weaknesses in institutional recruitment policies and processes. In their own interests, and that of students, we would like more institutions to address their recruitment strategies, particularly to identify students who have the ability to benefit but who may have qualifications or experience other than A-levels - for example, by emulating those institutions which already recognise qualifications such as GNVQs, Edexcel national diplomas, and nationally kitemarked Access Courses in their recruitment policies.

¹ 'The Influence of Neighbourhood Type on Participation in Higher Education - Interim Report'. HEFCE, April 1997.

- c. The focus of our support should not be only on student recruitment. Our research shows how non-completion (defined as students failing to achieve the goal which they had set for themselves in a particular year) correlates with a number of factors, particularly entry qualifications and social class. We must be sure that wider participation in HE does not simply result in more students failing. Within our proposed funding programme we seek to support institutions in establishing and improving structures that help students from non-traditional backgrounds to succeed.

14. Following from this, we believe that a number of key principles should underpin our approach to funding widening participation in HE:

- a. Access to achievement - we should encourage institutions not only to increase the participation of students from under-represented groups but also to help such students succeed.
- b. Increased collaboration - priority should be given to collaboration between HEIs and partners from other education sectors to improve progression routes to HE for under-represented groups.
- c. Recognising diversity - we should avoid prescription in our funding and allow for differences in institutional approach, adopting different funding approaches to recognise the diversity of missions and strategies in the sector.
- d. Targeting certain groups - emphasis should be placed on improving the representation of particular disadvantaged groups.

Funding objectives

15. In the light of the previous discussion we propose that our funding objectives should be to:

- a. Reward proven success and encourage institutional improvement in widening participation.
- b. Recognise the additional costs of providing access to under-represented groups.
- c. Increase the representation in HE of particular disadvantaged groups - for example, disabled students, young people from poor backgrounds, and those who missed out on HE opportunities first time round.

- d. Build partnerships between HEIs, schools and especially the FE sector to improve the progression rates to HE of previously disadvantaged students.
- e. Promote and disseminate good practice in strategies to widen participation.
- f. Support activity designed to retain students.
- g. Encourage collaboration between HEIs to promote the above objectives.

16. We seek comments on the proposed principles and funding objectives underpinning our approach to widening participation in higher education.

Targets

17. We would like to consider whether we should set targets for improving the participation of under-represented groups. To determine whether our funding objectives have been met, or whether the proposed funding mechanisms are having an impact, we may need measurable targets. However, there are a number of tensions to be resolved.

18. On the one hand, sector-wide targets would provide a focus for both Council and institutional activity. They would enable us to monitor progress towards improved participation rates of disadvantaged groups as well as the impact of our funding strategy. Specific national targets could provide an important marker for individual institutions' strategic objectives. On the other hand, the basis for establishing national targets is unclear, particularly given that future participation rates of some groups may be largely determined by factors outside the control of HE. Quantitative targets may not reflect the cultural and organisation changes which may be necessary within some institutions.

19. In keeping with the proposal to place increased emphasis on institutions' own participation strategies (see paragraphs 43-50), a better approach would be to require institutions to provide a range of strategic targets and performance indicators against which they would monitor achievement of their goals. These, aggregated across the sector, would provide us with measures against which to monitor progress and the impact of policy across the sector. Institution-based targets and performance measures could eventually provide benchmarks for institutions, which could have a more constructive

impact than sector-wide targets. They would also enable institutions to respond to the need to widen participation within the context of their own mission and circumstances.

20. We would expect institutions to include two key targets against which we would monitor both institutional and sector progress:

- a. Targets for improving the representation of specific under-represented groups.
- b. Targets for improvements in student retention, particularly for non-traditional students.

21. Our Performance Indicators Steering Group will be developing a range of performance indicators and benchmarks which recognise the diversity of the sector. The group has agreed in principle to a range of indicators which will measure the extent to which institutions recruit from under-represented groups. Measures of student progression have also been identified. We will seek comments from institutions on these performance indicators early in 1999.

22. We seek comments on our proposals to require institutions to provide targets and performance measures against which to monitor improvements in widening participation.

Funding mechanisms

23. In order to meet our funding objectives we propose that a combination of funding approaches should be introduced, both through the mainstream teaching funding method and through special funding initiatives.

Mainstream funding

24. In providing funds for teaching in the future we propose to allocate to institutions additional funds in respect of the participation of certain types of student. These additional funds would provide for the additional costs of provision for such students, support proven success in widening participation and provide an incentive for institutions to improve in this respect. The student-related additional funds would be for students from poor backgrounds, and for students with disabilities.

Students from poor backgrounds

25. The purpose of this new student-related funding would be to recognise the additional costs which more pro-active recruitment strategies for this group of students would incur. Such strategies could include developing alternative routes and pathways for entry to HE; summer schools for access and recruitment; Compacts between HEIs and schools; guidance and counselling at application and entry stages.

26. The additional funds would also recognise the costs of appropriate support structures (academic and pastoral) to ensure these students complete their courses. In allocating the additional funds we would expect more of such activity to take place in institutions to ensure wider participation.

27. So far, there has been no reliable way to define and measure such students. However, if we are to use funding to improve the participation of students from poor backgrounds, we need to agree an appropriate measure. There are two main alternatives: indicators based on social class and on geodemographic techniques. The sole source for the former would at present be information from the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). However, this applies only to full-time students, and is based on their own description of their parents' occupation. Geodemographic techniques, on the other hand, provide a measure related to social background for almost all students. We are able to use postcodes to link each student in each institution to a classification of neighbourhood type, from the most deprived to the most affluent. However, this is by no means a precise measure of social class. (More detailed discussion of these alternatives is at Annex A.)

28. We believe that geodemographic analyses provide a sufficiently robust basis on which to allocate funds at the institutional level to encourage wider participation. However, we invite views on this, and on possible alternatives.

29. We propose that an appropriate payment should relate to the number of full-time equivalent students from poor backgrounds (identified by whichever measure of poor background is agreed after this consultation). The value of the payment will be

based on further analysis of the additional costs associated with the recruitment and retention of such students, and the money available in 1999-2000.

Additional funds for students with disabilities

30. We recognise that institutions providing for disabled students incur additional costs. Until now the absence of a robust measure to count and monitor such students has prevented us from recognising these costs by applying a student-related premium. However, the Government has recently removed the means test for the Disability Student Allowance (DSA), so receipt of the DSA could be used to identify disabled students more accurately than in the past. Furthermore, if the DSA is extended to postgraduate and part-time students - as is currently being considered by the Government - it would be an even more accurate measure. Therefore, we propose to introduce a student-related additional payment for all disabled students, defined as students who receive a DSA. This could be introduced in 2000-01, when we expect to have suitable data on DSAs.

31. We propose that an appropriate payment - to be based on the money available, and current research into the costs of base-level provision for all disabled students - is applied to the number of students who receive a Disability Student Allowance.

32. The additional payments will be made in the allocation of funds for teaching and will be re-calculated each year based on the number of relevant students recruited by each institution.

33. Comment is invited on:

- a. The proposal to introduce student-related payments in the teaching funding method for students from poor backgrounds and for students with disabilities.
- b. The use of either social class or geodemographic data to measure students from poor backgrounds for funding purposes, as discussed in detail in Annex A.

Additional student numbers

34. We have already included widening access for groups under-represented in HE as a key national priority in allocating additional student numbers in 1998-99. This will continue to be a specific criterion in the allocation process, and it will direct increased student numbers to institutions with a commitment to widening participation. In particular, we recognise the important role which many further education colleges play in widening participation in HE, because they are local, and because they provide HE certificate and diploma-level programmes. We would expect FE colleges with HE provision to benefit from the emphasis given to HE diploma-level provision in the Government's plans for growth in HE, to encourage the development both of efficient and effective progression routes to degree level and of HE diploma-level qualifications as routes into employment. We will soon issue an invitation to bid for additional student numbers in 1999-2000 to all HE institutions and all FE colleges.

35. We invite comments on our proposal to continue to give priority to widening participation, and to diploma-level provision, in the allocation of additional student numbers.

Special funding

36. Special funding enables us to direct funds to support or develop specific activities with particular outcomes. Most special funding is allocated through a competitive bidding process. We intend to earmark special funds for:

- a. Building partnerships between HEIs, schools, FE colleges (in particular) and other providers to improve progression routes to HE for under-represented groups. This will complement the activity presently taking place in the FE sector in response to the Kennedy report, 'Learning Works'. In future years we intend to develop joint initiatives with the Further Education Funding Council.
- b. Disseminating and embedding good practice. It is important to share what institutions are doing and to facilitate the transfer of good practice. We will aim to do this through existing support and development networks in the FE/HE sectors.

37. We have launched a £2 million initiative in 1998-99 for these purposes. We will be allocating funds to regional and local partnerships between HEIs, schools, FE colleges and other providers to improve progression routes for under-represented groups. This will cover a range of activity including joint outreach work, an increase in Access Courses and the development of innovative progression schemes - for example, the use of summer schools as access routes to HE. We will soon be disseminating good practice and developing ways in which it can be shared by existing institutional networks. We are supporting the promotion of women into science, engineering and technology through the Commission on University Career Opportunities (CUCO) Athena Project; and we intend to build on our previous successful initiatives aimed at improving provision for students with disabilities.

38. In the light of comments from institutions in regional seminars held in July 1998, we intend these initial developments to extend beyond 1998-99. The HEFCE Board has provisionally committed a further £4 million to continue existing special programmes and develop related programmes in 1999-2000. We will consider increasing these funds in the light of experience gained in the near future and the available funds from Government.

39. We seek comments on the purpose and nature of special funding, and suggestions for priorities for future special funding.

Funding

40. To make an impact on the nature of student participation and institutional participation strategies, we need to allocate significant resources to this policy. We propose that the balance of funds should lie, at least initially, more towards mainstream rather than special funding. We propose this balance because of the need to give institutions support for existing students and to allow institutions to act straight away on their present successful practices.

41. We would like to spend up to £30 million to support these proposals, but this will depend in part on the funds available. The HEFCE Board will

agree the final amount in December, following this consultation and the Government's expenditure plans for HE in the years 1999-2000 to 2001-02. The funds associated with student numbers for widening participation would be additional to this amount.

42. We invite comments on our funding proposals for widening participation, and in particular the balance between mainstream and special funding.

Institutional participation strategies

43. The Dearing Committee emphasised the importance of institutional strategies for widening participation, stressing the need for institutions' governing bodies to monitor and review achievements. In its response to the Dearing report, the Government agreed that institutions should review their strategies and publish outcomes of the review and how their access and participation strategies have been implemented.

44. We recently consulted the sector on changes to their corporate plans and how we use these plans (HEFCE 98/13). We propose to introduce a three-year cycle for corporate plans, focusing on high level strategic aims. In the course of the three-year cycle we would request additional specific policy strategies to inform our policy development and funding initiatives. We propose that this should include institutions' participation strategies, the development and improvement of which could become a feature of our funding programme.

Role of institutions' strategies

45. The purpose of participation strategies would be to encourage institutions to develop coherent and planned approaches to the recruitment and progression of all students, particularly those from groups under-represented in HE. Such strategies would highlight institutions' commitment to these objectives, describe the activities undertaken to achieve them, and the support structures required.

46. We believe that, in future, the proposed payments and the additional student numbers for widening participation should only be allocated to institutions that have an institutional participation strategy, and can show that they are implementing it.

Nature and monitoring of participation strategies

47. Participation strategies will vary according to the mission, ethos and wider strategy of an institution. We intend to support diversity rather than prescribing any particular set of approaches or strategies for widening participation. To be effective such strategies must be owned by institutions, rather than being simple responses to our requirement for plans. Institutions' governing bodies must take responsibility for these plans, their monitoring and review.

48. We do not intend to compare strategies on a competitive basis for funding allocations. However, we propose to provide generic guidance on what we expect to be covered, to ensure there is evidence for funding decisions. Institutions could then respond according to their individual circumstances and wider missions. We believe that such a light touch would be welcomed by many institutions. An example of such guidance is outlined in Annex B.

49. In linking participation strategies to funding and the allocation of additional student numbers we will need mechanisms for monitoring to ensure that the strategies are being implemented. These mechanisms should be sufficient to satisfy our needs but not too burdensome for institutions. Annex B outlines possible monitoring arrangements.

Timetable for institutions' strategies

50. It is unlikely that all institutions will have enough time to produce full explicit strategies to inform funding decisions for 1999-2000. Therefore, the link between participation strategies and funding could take effect from 2000-01. This would enable us to promote and disseminate good practice, and help institutions develop appropriate strategies. The EQUALL Committee will be asked for advice on this in due course.

51. In the meantime, the student-related funds could be assigned to institutions in 1999-2000 on the basis of quantitative indicators only. These funds would be for one year only, until validated by participation strategies submitted by institutions in time for funding in 2000-01. We propose the immediate introduction of the additional funds, with strategies being developed later, even though

for a small number of institutions this might mean funds being reduced in future if no acceptable participation strategy is forthcoming.

52. We seek comment on:

- a. The proposal to link institutions' participation strategies to funding.
- b. The nature of participation strategies and the proposed guidance in Annex B.
- c. The proposals for monitoring the implementation of participation strategies, as outlined in Annex B.
- d. The proposed timetable for linking participation strategies to funding.

Summary of responses sought

53. We invite comments and discussion on our strategic objectives to widen participation in HE, and the funding proposals to deliver these objectives. In particular, we would like comment on:

- a. The proposed principles and funding objectives underpinning our approach to widening participation in higher education.
- b. The proposal to require institutions to provide performance targets and measures against which to monitor improvements in widening participation.
- c. The proposal to introduce student-related additional payments in the teaching funding method for students from poor backgrounds and for students with disabilities.
- d. The use of either social class or geodemographic data to measure students from poor backgrounds for funding purposes, as discussed in detail in Annex A.
- e. The proposal to continue to give priority to widening participation and diploma-level provision in the allocation of additional student numbers.
- f. The purpose and nature of special funding and suggestions for priorities for future special funding programmes.
- g. Our funding proposals for widening participation, and in particular the balance between mainstream and special funding.

1. The proposal to link institutions' participation strategies to funding.
2. The nature of participation strategies and the proposed guidance in Annex B.
3. The proposals for monitoring the implementation of participation strategies, as outlined in Annex B.
4. The proposed timetable for linking participation strategies to funding.

Responses

54. Please send responses to this consultation by
2 November 1998 to:

Nicola Dowds
Policy Directorate
HEFCE
Northavon House
Coldharbour Lane
Bristol
BS16 1QD

Annex A

Measurement of socio-economic background

Overview

1. There are two sources of data which can provide a measure of the socio-economic background of students:
 - the social class, based on an occupation code for the student's parents
 - the postcode of the student's home.
2. In theory it would be possible to develop a measure based on the means testing of students for fee payment, but this information is not available at institutional level, nor are there any plans to collect it at this level.

Social class

3. Young UCAS entrants (defined as under 21 on 30 September of year of entry) provide a description of the occupation of their highest earning parent or guardian and, from this description, UCAS derives their 'social class'. This measure is only available for UCAS entrants, which excludes part-time students and all direct entrants. It is also based on a self-assessment, which cannot be audited or verified. The difficulties in consistently and completely deriving occupation codes from descriptions are well known. It is possible that students from one region would be more likely to be coded as 'unknown' than those from another; this would introduce a systematic institutional-level bias. However, on the plus side, social class is related to the circumstances of individual students; and the issue of participation by different social classes has been widely reported and discussed, and is in general better understood than other measures of socio-economic background.

4. Social class will be collected on the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) record from 1998-99; data from the full July return will be available in early 2000. Any allocation based on social class before this date would require data to be passed to the HEFCE from UCAS. This would be technically possible, but would require the agreement of UCAS and the institutions.

5. If this measure were to be adopted as a factor in funding, there would need to be discussions with UCAS. Decisions about collecting occupation descriptions and coding occupations are currently made without reference to any funding implications.

Postcode-based classifications

6. Some of the weaknesses of social class measures can be overcome by using the postcode to identify the neighbourhood or locality of students' homes before they enter the institution. There are several ways to measure the social and economic standing of that neighbourhood, all of which are largely or entirely based on census data. These include:

- bespoke models
- Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) index of local conditions
- geodemographic classification systems.

Bespoke models

7. The Scottish Higher Education Funding Council has commissioned research by Professor Raab at Napier University into the factors affecting participation in higher education. The analysis was carried out at a relatively high level of aggregation (about 5000 households) yet still demonstrated the strength of the association between social class, unemployment levels and participation in higher education.

8. There are clearly some advantages in using a model specifically derived for analysing higher education participation. However, the resources required to extend such an approach to England would be considerable, particularly if the results had to be sufficiently robust to support a funding allocation.

DETR index of local conditions

9. The DETR index of local conditions was developed by the Centre for Urban Policy Studies at the University of Manchester. The index combines a number of indicators into a single deprivation score.

10. The index is based on a relatively small number of variables, compared with the geodemographic classifier described below. The problems of local fluctuations and distortions caused by extreme values are, arguably, more severe than for a more broadly based geodemographic classifier. The index is particularly good at identifying extreme levels of social deprivation, but low levels of participation in higher education are not confined to such extremes. We have not yet examined the relationship between participation and the DETR index, but we intend to do so in the near future.

11. The DETR index has the advantage of being widely used within Government, and is already used by other funding councils, albeit in a modified form. But with this indicator we could provide institutions with a look-up table, so that they could work out their widening participation factor for themselves.

Geodemographic classification systems - Super Profiles

12. Over the last 20 years a variety of geodemographic classification systems have been devised. The classification we used in our analysis of the relationship between neighbourhood affluence and participation levels was developed by Professor Batey and Dr Brown at the University of Liverpool, and is licensed under the name 'Super Profiles'.

13. Other geodemographic classifiers could have been used, though Super Profiles has some advantages for the HEFCE applications. In particular, Professor Batey and Dr Brown have a long track record of using geodemographic classifiers for policy analysis and development in the public sector.

14. The Super Profiles classification was based on a large number of census variables, supplemented by electoral roll and commercial trading data. This broad base of data, and the subsequent process of data reduction and clustering, along with the explicit treatment of smaller enumeration districts, means that the classification system should provide a stable measure even when applied to small areas. It also covers a range of affluence, from the very well off through to the poorest. We have shown that there are marked differences in higher

education participation between the different neighbourhood types identified by this geodemographic classifier.

15. One disadvantage in using this classifier for funding is that it would not be possible (other than at high cost) to make the classification system available to institutions. The resulting student profiles can and will be made available, and it may be possible to provide the classification right down to the individual record level. But without purchasing the software licence, institutions would not be in a position to work out their student profile for themselves.

Mature students

16. For young students, both the social class data and postcode identification are related to the students' socio-economic origins, through information about their parents' occupations and parental home. For mature students this is not the case. The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) only collects data on the occupations of parents for students under 21. Older students provide a description of the occupation of the person who contributes the highest income in their household. Similarly, whilst it is reasonable to assume that the postcode collected for most young entrants is their parental home, this is unlikely to be the case for mature students.

Conclusion

17. Our preferred method of measuring the socio-economic background of students is through the use of the postcode to identify the neighbourhoods of students' homes. We have found that the Super Profiles geodemographic classifier is able to distinguish between neighbourhood types with markedly different higher education participation rates and, currently, this classifier is our first choice for funding allocations. However, we will be looking closely at alternative systems based on postcode identification and will take into account the views of institutions, particularly in respect to their requirements for their own monitoring.



Annex B

Proposed generic guidance for institutions' participation strategies

1. Institutions' participation strategies should include the following:
 - a. A description of how the participation strategy relates to the over-arching corporate strategy and financial plan, and to other related sub-strategies - for example, for learning and teaching, and staff development.
 - b. Clear listing of aims and objectives, and strategies for achieving these.
 - c. An understanding of the present and potential student population of the institution.
 - d. Identification of target groups and any specific targets.
 - e. Identification of key partners and collaborative relationships related to the implementation of the strategy, and delivery of the aims and objectives.
 - f. Evidence of mechanisms to monitor and measure progress against targets and objectives.
 - g. Provision for review of the strategy and its publication by the governing body.
 - h. Evidence of approaches to student support (academic and pastoral).
 - i. Approaches to improving student retention and specific associated targets.

Proposed monitoring arrangements for institutional participation strategies

2. Monitoring arrangements could include the following, which are not mutually exclusive:
 - a. The HEFCE's regional consultants could validate that institutions' strategies broadly follow our guidelines. The EQUALL Committee could provide an overview of strategies and consider cases where strategies may not initially meet our criteria for premium funding.
 - b. Institutions' governing bodies could be asked to monitor and review progress of their participation strategies (including indicators which demonstrate their performance against strategic objectives). They could also be asked to publish these reviews every three years, in parallel with the three-year corporate plan.
 - c. In developing performance indicators for the sector, we could monitor appropriate measures of institutional and sector-wide performance relating to widening participation and student progression. This would eventually provide opportunities for institutional benchmarking of such activity.



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Cover sheet

Additional student places and funds 1999-2000.

Please complete the disk version and attach a signed print-out to the front of the bid (One cover sheet per bid).

Name of institution ALLIANCE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM AND WESTHILL COLLEGE

Title of bid	Widening Participation and Increasing Provision Below Degree Level
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Priorities

1. Rewarding high quality in learning and teaching:

and/or

2. Widen access to higher education, especially in line with specific policy objectives to:

a. offer programmes which lead to qualifications below degree level

and/or

b. increase the range of higher education options within a region, particularly by focusing the additional provision in FE sector colleges

and/or

c. help to meet the skill shortages for graduates.

Cost centre code/ Super-class II Code	Subject	Level of initial qualification (code 1-6*)	Numbers sought (head count)		New Provision (code 0 or 1**)
			FT	PT	
25	IT Skills	6 (Cen. HE)		80	1
6	Counselling	1, 5, 6 (Cen. HE)		102	1
41	Caring for Autistic People	6		20	1
41	Caring for Elderly People	6		30	1
41	Continuation Studies	3		20	1
41	Duality Management Systems	6 (Cen. HE)		20	1
6	Community and Youth Work	1		20	1
33	Applied Dance in Education and Community	2, 3		20	1
38	Soot	2, 4		40	1
32	Islamic Learning	6 (Cen. HE)	10	10	1
34	Childhood Studies	4		40	1
41	School Governor Training	6 (Cen. HE)		50	1
34	Classroom Assistants	3, 6 (Cen. HE)		24	1
6	Interprofessional Health Studies	1		20	1
	TOTAL		10	496	

* Key
1. PGT
2. Degree
3. DipHE
4. HND
5. HNC
6. Other

**Key
0. No
1. Yes

Contact name Philip Denner

Tel 0121-414-3808

E-mail p.w.denner@bham.ac.uk

Chief Executive or
authorised officer signature

Date: 04/12/98

Name (print) Professor Martin Snaith, Pro-Vice-Chancellor on behalf of Vice-Chancellor

Introduction

1. This bid has been prepared and is submitted by an Alliance of higher education (HE) institutions, namely the University of Birmingham (lead institution) and Westhill College of Higher Education (hereafter 'the Alliance'). The Funding Council (HEFCE) and the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) have been closely involved in the genesis of the Alliance, and this bid is crucial to the underpinning of the new arrangements. We believe that our bid is coherent in that its objective is to launch the Alliance as a major and innovative player in lifelong learning in the region. In the process of delivering the bid however, detailed proposals at programme level are necessarily looking to address what is a segmented market. In assembling the bid, discussions have been held with the following further education (FE) colleges: City College Birmingham (incorporating the former Handsworth College and the Women's Academy), Boumville College, Fircroft College in Selly Oak, Birmingham, and Solihull College.

Mission and Strategy: Widening Participation and Increasing Provision below Degree Level

2. The Alliance is committed to the establishment of a Learning Network, which is being developed to deliver quality provision on an inclusive basis. Annex 1 provides a fuller description of the Learning Network. Its aims and objectives take account of the Alliance members' institutional missions and strategies. These are noted in detail in Annex 1.

3. This bid reflects the nature of the Learning Network in meeting its own aims and objectives, and will build on the presence within the West Midlands area of the Alliance members. The University of Birmingham's reputation for high quality access and learning, and Westhill College's long tradition of support for social and educational inclusiveness, will be, together, major strengths supporting this bid.

4. In addition to national policy objectives for the creation and sustenance of lifelong learning and for widening of access, the Alliance seeks to satisfy a growth in teaching and learning needs from a changing and maturing student cohort in the region. The Alliance seeks to take action on its view that the nature and characteristics of contemporary HE provision requires a fundamental shift in delivery if it is to keep pace with an evolving student profile, and also with national objectives for greater levels of off-campus and lifelong learning. The effectiveness of such a fundamental shift in delivery is considered to be best facilitated by the way it tackles the realities of educational exclusion implied as a consequence of the historical emphasis in HE delivery on adolescent full-time student cohorts. This bid therefore seeks to facilitate and foster such a radical re-orientation within three areas:

- The Alliance will create a major new force within the West Midlands region for responsive, partnership development across the post-compulsory spectrum. Widening access to the Westhill College and University of Birmingham qualifications framework is a major objective of the Alliance.
- The Learning Network will be capable of effectively reaching into educationally deprived constituencies. It is anticipated that the University of Birmingham credit and qualifications,

and their accompanying quality requirements, will add very considerable and attractive value to the motivational and recruitment factors which are intrinsic to widening of HE provision.

- The Alliance's educational approach to the range of provision proposed in this bid reflects its plans for the development of a 'dynamic curriculum' model. This refers to the range of innovative teaching and learning methods rooted in the recognition of cultural and social needs. A fuller account of this model is presented in Annex 2 to this bid.

5. Presented in Annex 3 to this bid is an analysis of market demand. This analysis, together with specific details of proposed programmes (given below), show how this bid aims to satisfy both student and employer demand, as well as the specific priorities central to the present round of bids.

Details of proposed programmes

6. The development of existing or emerging professional groups is addressed in this bid in the section giving details of proposed programmes below. To this Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is added a further widening provision strategy, carried by the developmental pathway from certificate (aimed at currently under-represented groups) and diploma through to masters level. Skill deficiencies of a generic nature are tackled where the idea is to produce an imaginative combination of IT skills with other skill and subject based knowledge. Widening provision, subject knowledge and skill enhancement for new client groups who would not normally be able to participate in any form of HE are priorities directly addressed. Some of the proposed programmes below are the result of sustained negotiation with local community organisations. Such programmes will address issues of academic knowledge and academic and practical skills development in areas where there is both a recognised need and a comparative lack of participation in HE. There will be an element of FE/HE partnership in all of these areas.

- a) **Proposed programmes in Information Technology (IT)** will recognise the shortfall and rapidly changing skills base of people throughout their working lives. A range of accredited part-time programmes at HE Levels 1, 2, 3 and M will have a subject content extending from the mastering of specific software packages, applications using the Internet, generic problem solving and software analytic skills. Programmes will be taught using computer teaching clusters on campus and at various locations in the community. Delivery will be on a part-time basis and during the evening, at weekends and during the day. It may involve regular weekly meetings and intensive block teaching of one to five days. Programmes will be marketed within the general public and, at Level 1, will have open entry. Specific groups targeted will be recent graduates who require rapid IT skills updating, and under-represented ethnic groups who can use IT skills for entry into the job market, and also disabled students who require skills to enhance their communication abilities and employment prospects.

Bid numbers: It is intended that this programme will grow considerably, but initially the bid is for 40 FTE, 80 students.

- b) **Proposed programmes in Counselling** will aim to widen access to counselling training for students from minority communities or for students to obtain greater understanding of the needs of clients from minority communities, or to provide progression routes from part time counselling programmes at HE Level 1 leading to the award of certificates, to programmes organised in conjunction with the British Association of Counsellors (BAC) leading to the award of diplomas, BPhil and Masters and offered to both the general public and particular client groups currently under-represented in terms of counselling skills.

Bid numbers: Diploma programmes 15 FTE, 30 students over 2 years; Counselling in Community Health Issues 8 FTE, 16 students for 1 year; Transcultural Counselling, 10 FTE, 20 students for 2 years; BPhil/MA programmes 20 FTE, 36 students over 2 years. Total 53 FTE, 102 students.

- c) **Undergraduate programmes in caring for people with autism spectrum disorders** will fill an important lack of people trained in the understanding and care skills of people with autism. It will be at Level 1 with open entry to people who are in a caring situation with autistic people (relatives, paid and voluntary care workers, etc.). This programme will be run in conjunction with the West Midland Autistic Society and, through them, will network to a regional clientele. Initially, the programme will be available through part-time study at weekends and will later be developed for distance learning delivery using the Internet.

Bid numbers: Initially 10 FTE, 20 students over 2 years.

- d) **Undergraduate programmes in caring for elderly people** will fill an important lack of people trained in the understanding and care skills of elderly people. It will be at Level 1 with open entry to people who are in a caring situation with elderly people (relatives, paid and voluntary care workers, etc.). Local market surveys and consultation with social services organisation indicate that requests for courses and information to enhance the care of elderly people is large. Particularly lacking are understanding and skills at Level 1 which will rapidly disseminate into more effective care of people within the community. Initially, the programme will be available through part-time study at weekends and will later be developed for distance learning delivery.

Bid numbers: Initially 15 FTE, 30 students over 2 years.

- e) **Proposed Level 3 (BPhil) programmes in Continuation Studies** will be aimed at people who are professionally qualified below the level of degree but whose career and employment opportunities will be enhanced by the acquisition of generic skills at Level 3. These skills will include problem analysis and solution, presentation and oral skills, information skills including IT, management skills and so on. The programme will be aimed at professional target groups such as those in the medical and caring professions who wish to move into supervisory or management positions.

Bid numbers: Initially 10 FTE, 20 students over 2 years.

- f) **Level 1 (Cert. HE) programmes in Quality Management Systems** target West Midlands voluntary or non-profit organisations which are often limited in growth and development by their organisational and management efficiency levels. Voluntary and part-time staff are unable to attend full-time programmes to acquire such skills and this part-time programme will be aimed at providing Level 1 management and organisational skills applicable to a wide range of voluntary organisations. In planning the content and marketing of this programme, there will be close collaboration with the Birmingham Voluntary Services Council, an umbrella body for approximately 1000 voluntary organisations in the West Midlands region.

Bid number: Initially 10 FTE, 20 students over 2 years.

- g) **Proposed postgraduate programmes in Community and Youth Work Training** will build on the success of existing part time routes to the Dip. HE and BPhil programmes by extending them to Masters level. The MA in Applied Community Studies is designed to fill gaps in skills shortages among workers in this field such as networking and partnership building, curriculum development, integrated approaches to working with clients, and fieldwork research, and the MA will enable workers from 'non-traditional' backgrounds to progress to management and policy making roles.

Bid number: 10 FTE, 20 students over 2 years.

- h) **Proposals to build on the success of the ACE sub-degree route in 'Applied Dance in Education and Community'** take account of the continuing and growing need for innovative HE opportunities for people in the professional dance world. Building upon the success of the Birmingham Royal Ballet scheme, as well as ambitions to broaden access to this part time customised post-experience programme, our proposed programme will cater for professionals whose line of work may have disadvantaged them in terms of academic opportunities as traditionally conceived. HE opportunities for artists/dance professionals are rare, particularly for those without a first degree.

Bid numbers: 10 FTE, 20 students over 2 years.

- i) **Proposals for pathways from sports related HND courses to a part-time BA (Humanities) degree programme** seek to develop partnership arrangements with Solihull College of Further Education. At present, there are no opportunities for HND students within the West Midlands region to enter a sport-related degree programme after one year of study at HND level.

Bid number: 20 FTE, 40 students over 2 years.

- j) **Proposals for Islamic Learning** take particular account of the principles underpinning the dynamic curriculum. The objectives of the Learning Network involve establishing a Foundation Course to be delivered at identified Islamic Institutions and which aim to offer students (Muslim females in particular) the opportunity to gain a Cert. HE with all the potential to proceed to a degree qualification and beyond.

Bid number: 15 FTE, 10 part-time and 10 full-time, over 1 year.

- k) **Proposals for Dip. HE or BTEC HND in Childhood Studies** aim to develop the existing Advanced Diploma in Childhood Education (ADCE) provision at the Women's Academy (under Westhill supervision) to enable students to extend their studies beyond Level 1 towards a BA. The Women's Academy was established by East Birmingham College in 1996 to meet the specific needs of female students in the East Birmingham area, and is particularly (but not exclusively) of benefit to British Pakistani females who, for cultural or domestic reasons, may not be able to study further from home or in a mixed environment. The demand for this type of course is in the region of 1 or 2 classroom assistants from every school in Birmingham and the surrounding authority areas.

Bid number: 15 FTE, 40 students, over 2 years.

- l) **Proposals for School Governor Training** focus on school governors who are undertaking training and development as part of a joint project between the local education authority (LEA), Westhill College and the Training and Enterprise Council (TEC). The scheme is open to a wide range of learners from differing backgrounds but is of especial benefit to those without formal qualifications in education who will go on to build up a portfolio based on both accreditation of prior learning and new knowledge and skills gained from undertaking the role of school governor. Students will be able to build up credit within the BA Combined Studies degree programme, and successful completion of the scheme will offer credits at Level 1.

Bid number: 10 FTE, 50 part-time, over 2 years.

- m) **Proposals to support Classroom Assistants participating in the TTA's Registered Teacher Programme** offer a progression route within the BA Combined Studies environment to allow students to gain credit at HE Levels 1 and 2 in subjects providing a suitable background for primary teaching. The programme will be attractive to aspiring teachers who may otherwise be deterred from entering teaching because of the expense - both in terms of forfeited earnings and in taking out loans for support.

Bid number: 12 FTE, 24 part-time, over 2 years.

- n) **Proposed postgraduate programmes in Interprofessional Health Studies** will address the radical changes in people's working environments created by government strategies on health, social care, education and employment and which encourage providers to re-assess need, evaluate existing services and create partnerships for more innovative and appropriate services. The programme will lead to the award of BPhil or Masters and will aim to widen access to HE by being directly relevant to the issues people are engaged with in their working environment. It will be especially attractive to those who have no HE background or, if they possess a first degree, have not previously considered working towards a higher degree.

Bid number: 10 FTE, 20 part-time, over 2 years.

Quality Issues

7. The Funding Council will already have both internal and external assessor evidence of Alliance member's institutional level quality assurance frameworks and the outcome of individual subject reviews. This material, together with Annex 3, may be reviewed as containing evidence not only for rewarding high quality in teaching and learning, e.g. Counselling, Community and Youth Work, Dance, and Islamic Learning (Applied Theology), but also of opinions and support from professional bodies and employers on the quality of provision. As a generic point, it may be noted that Westhill College received a very good result from a recent OFSTED inspection of its ITT provision, gaining 14 grade 2s.

Programme and Course Development

8. As already noted above and in Annex 2, the proposed programmes each operate in tandem with the Alliance's approach to methodologies and delivery activities and with regional awards via the Accreditation of Prior Experience and Learning (APEL) module. Outcomes and dissemination are also important in closing the feedback loop for curriculum development and continuing improvements in the nature, content, scope and method of delivery.

Annex 1

Development of a Learning Network in Birmingham

1. The University of Birmingham and Westhill College are working with FE colleges and others to develop a Learning Network in Birmingham. The approach taken towards lifelong learning and widening participation together with the potentials of IT technology has opened up the opportunity to explore "provider side" issues which influence access to HE by under-represented groups. Developmental work arising from access projects, adult education and new systems of "open learning" has identified a need to review HE curricula in terms of content as well as modes of delivery. The intention of the network is to recognise innovative learning in practice, involving community learning partnerships and local employers.

Aims:

- to widen access to qualifications that are currently classified at 'below degree' level;
- to focus on partnership for additional provision in FE sector colleges;
- to improve geographical access for inner city and 'outreach' provision;
- to offer subject specialisms not sufficiently or widely covered by HE sector institutions;
- to provide a supportive learning environment through the provision of a 'dynamic curriculum';
- to offer certificates and diplomas in HE, and 'below degree' level courses comprising university credit;
- to implement innovative progression routes from both 'learning communities' and FE into HE.

Objectives:

- to provide longer term commitment to widening participation;
- to investigate how local and regional communities work to support wider participation in HE;
- to meet the emerging demands for HE from ethnic and faith communities which is relevant to their lives, beliefs and cultural practices;
- to provide and co-ordinate core data on targeted participants;
- to promote outreach provision in depth and consolidate HE and FE provision in its regional context;
- to promote accessibility to HE opportunities via the accreditation of prior learning and experience;
- to identify the strengths and competencies owned by mature and lifelong learners;
- to identify and apply to practice resources and materials which offer both academic and personal support for learners and, in particular, to support the use of APL and APEL strategies;
- to disseminate evidence on self-learning competency which is of relevance to HE students.

Provision

2. The Learning Network will emphasise programmes which:

- Do not involve full-time attendance in HE;

- Are deliverable outside main sites (including the home and the work place);
- Can be delivered through and with different mediums and develop a "dynamic curriculum", responsive to the needs of individuals and the community
- Are inclusive, whilst preserving the highest quality associated with the Alliance's members.

Towards a Unified Credit Framework

3. The Learning Network will establish a group to develop modular blocks of provision within a common credit framework which bridges FE and HE. In the first instance, specific curriculum areas will be highlighted which will be accessible in some way throughout Birmingham, employing outreach, technology and other methods to reach those currently under represented in HE. Maximum flexibility in modes of learning will be developed with a Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) system put in place such that achievement in one organisation can be transferred to another and there is accredited achievement at all levels.

Using technology

4. A Technology Group will be established to explore the potential use of new technology for on-line and distance learning, sharing the experience of FE and HE.

5. Local and regional industry will be involved to develop distance learning packages and linkages with the University of Industry (Ufi) and National Grid. A primary aim of the group will be to identify provision to be the subject of an initial Web-based and/or electronically delivered programme in 1999/2000.

Communicating with the Market

6. The Network must ensure that the right services and provision are established to meet the needs of the local community and enable individuals and groups to be aware of developments taking place. As such, under represented groups of learners in Birmingham must be identified, together with their specific needs in terms of skills, content and modes of delivery. A strong identity for the University of Birmingham Learning Network must be established, with an appropriate logo, web-site and other publicity materials and it will be necessary to investigate the feasibility of a "one-stop" single telephone information service to link existing and developing services.

7. In order for such a network to truly meet the needs of the community which it serves, real co-operative partnerships must be encouraged to develop between local HEIs, FE institutions, school, libraries, industry and community-based organisations. The Network must also have strong links with regional and national initiatives such as Ufi and the Digital College. The establishment of such a network will provide for the kind of co-operation between institutions which is innovative and allows for individual growth and community capacity building. Between the institutions involved, the Network can be fully inclusive, providing something for everyone, at every level, accessible in some way or other, everywhere.

Annex 2

The "Dynamic Curriculum" Model

1. It is the belief of the Alliance members that the widening of access to mainstream provision at their institutions involves the recognition of new and previously unrecognised needs which are emerging from socially and economically excluded ethnic and faith communities. Understanding of this can be enhanced, we believe, by a new model called 'Dynamic Curriculum'.
2. In the model, a series of innovations is proposed for subsequent detailed development which include the recognition of cultural difference, the promotion of key/core skills and the identification and support for 'life transitions', 'reference groups' and 'social participation', all of which will help break the logic which leads to disparities in access to education. Taken together these factors make up what we wish to call the "dynamic curriculum" for widening participation.
3. The model will draw upon the 'social capital' which reaches into and attracts immense loyalty among some of the most deprived and excluded communities within and beyond the City of Birmingham. The churches, mosques, gurdwaras and temples, for example, are arguably the biggest mutual institutions of local and regional civic society. The benefits of the proposed model will be felt by individuals but will also inculcate concepts of discourse, citizenship and social/political participation.
4. The model aims to address four issues of principle and policy:
 - i. The existing HE curriculum is most often pre-figured, pre-formulated, pre-existing and was designed for campus based 18+ students in residential settings. For the majority this is appropriate but our problem is very substantial minorities who do not correspond to our requirements but have their own.
 - ii. Widening participation is now concerned with creating demand not simply opening doors a little wider to what exists. We need to be market makers not just market takers. Access is no longer about more sophisticated and expensive rationing of places but about the dynamic development of provision and opportunities.
 - iii. The model also addresses the issues of quality as fitness for purpose. A new approach to primarily adult learners is needed, based in two settings, the community (ethnic / faith / interest) and the workplace (work based learning). Open systems are needed. e.g. Credit, Worked Based Learning (WBL), Vocational Lifelong Learning (VLL), AP(E)L, and a qualifications framework linking Continuing Education (CE), Adult Education, FE and University of Birmingham HE. Quality is vital but should not be confused with methodology: quality is independent of a specific method of delivery or learning (e.g. Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC) report on Modularity 1996) and Dearing who extolled the benefits of market led choice and sensitivity to consumers.
 - iv. The model is not a 1990s substitute for improved mainstream HE provision. It is or should be a separate and complementary approach to learning and teaching which recognises the

diversity of learning modes and practices. Quality and uniformity are hard to reconcile in HE. High quality performance to acknowledged standards in different contexts is the aim.

5. The elements of the model can be summarised as embracing the following elements:

- A philosophy of educational development with a strategic and programmatic framework;
- A new form of participation and of assumption of responsibility involving adults learning from their experience, values and expectation; a stakeholder approach;
- There is an emphasis on action learning and self-learning competency rather than on "provided" education;
- A focus on learning rather than teaching;
- A focus on the individual's responsibility for learning rather than on the institutions' themes;
- A focus on the connecting activities of education institutions and sites of learning rather than the insulated activities of colleges and universities;
- The contexts in which people need to learn encompass an increasingly wide range of site and settings (including community based and voluntary sector bodies, churches and faith association, ethnic groups, intermediary bodies such as trade unions and of course the panoply of work sites);
- Part time and continuing study and informal learning are promoted as is the reality of existing work based learning;
- Equal access to learning is promoted by the positive recognition of difference, e.g. Islamic Learning for Muslims, the use of ethnic languages, the recognition of faith groups and religious belief as learning contexts or sites the recognition and validation of different styles of learning;
- Equal Access to learning for work based learners is promoted by the recognition for academic credit of: work processes, team contributions, personal resourcefulness, implementation of change and innovation, self-development for personal and professional employability.

6. The Dynamic Curriculum Model in practice: Examples and links with the Alliance

- The Golden Hillock Mosque, Birmingham;
- The Hindu Temple Management Committee (Hindu Council of Birmingham);
- The Hindu Womens' Network;
- The Darul Aloom College, Manchester, and the Islam Centre, Leicester;
- Black and White Christian Centre, Selly Oak;
- Peace Studies, with University of Birmingham, School of Continuing Studies;
- WBL at appropriate levels of accreditation;
- Alliances with organisations whose core activity is the competence and capacity development of the individuals who comprise their core work force (the academic and the vocational via CPD), e.g. Brookes clinics;
- Classroom assistants and childcare with Birmingham LEA and Coventry Community Education;
- Kidderminster Muslim Womens' College;
- Birmingham as a 'learning city'.

Review of Market

1. A recent report by the National Skills Taskforce (1998), Towards a National Skills Agenda, distinguished between Skills Shortages and Skills Gaps, viz.:

Skill Shortage – refers to the situation where there's a genuine shortage in the labour market of a type of skill being sought leading to difficulties in recruitment. The report indicates that the most pervasive shortages exist in IT specialists.

Skill Gap – a deficiency in the skills of existing employees or new recruits which reduce business performance. The report points to deficiencies in employability and key skills generally, including graduates.

2. Further, the report indicates that demand for generic skills and personal competencies has increased in recent years through an emphasis on customer care and the complexity of the production process. Problem areas include communication, customer care, teamworking and computer literacy together with motivation, discipline, judgement and initiative.

3. The case for a lack of suitably trained candidates in IT was further backed up by the Government Office (1998), West Midland Regional Assessment, giving guidance to those bidding under European Social Fund Objective 4:

"The growth in recent years of IT usage by firms of all sizes and in all sectors, together with the ever increasing range of available IT applications, has made IT literacy a required skill for workers in most occupational groups, while at the same time significantly increasing the demand for IT specialists. There is evidence that Skill shortages exist in both higher level IT specialist skills and lower/intermediate level IT user skills."

4. A Funding Council press release (18.8.98), Plans to Promote High Quality and Widen Participation in Higher Education, points to the under representation of Moslem women, young black Caribbean men, people with disabilities and those from poor backgrounds within HE, and there is a strong statement of support for the building of partnerships between HEIs, schools and especially FE colleges in order to improve success rates of previously disadvantaged students and increasing the numbers progressing to HE.

5. Research commissioned by The Birmingham and Solihull FE Widening Participation Partnership from Warwick University indicates, *inter alia*, that general participation appears to be higher in the areas surrounding FE colleges. This is a significant indicator of the effectiveness of FE colleges in access to HE. The research provides strong support for a regional and responsive partnership development across the post compulsory spectrum as outlined in the current bid. In addition, the inclusion of programmes relating to the fields of social care and health provide genuine new opportunities for progression to those working within them, many of whom are members of groups currently under represented within HE.

6. Ongoing joint research (currently unpublished) involving REACHOUT, a project which works specifically to create a route to higher education for disadvantaged groups in the Newtown, Ladywood and Lee Bank areas of the City of Birmingham, and The University of Birmingham, indicates that many involved in REACHOUT have a sense of being in the wrong job area and are unable to move out of it without further qualifications. This problem is particularly acute for people who trained for specific vocational areas after leaving school. There is a wealth of training and experience in areas such as childcare and social care. However without the attainment of new qualifications, little possibility of obtaining increased responsibility through promotion exists.
7. Birmingham Community and Voluntary Sector based businesses have been recognised as making a vital contribution to Community Economic Development through their scope for providing local employment, contributing to social inclusion and sustainable development (see (1) Birmingham City Council's Community Economic Development Framework, 1998; (2) European Commission (1996), Social and Economic Inclusion through Regional Development).
8. Birmingham Voluntary Services Council has identified a total turnover of £37.2 million within a sample of 179 (of 1,500+) local voluntary organisations, making them significant community sector employers. However, funding dependency and a lack of key management and organisational skills makes voluntary and community groups, especially those from minority ethnic communities, very vulnerable. Organisational and management difficulties are often cited by funders as reasons for withdrawing funding from voluntary and community organisations.
9. Currently, many organisations are facing upheaval, financial constraints, expansion in some cases, new working methods and a range of changes necessitated by external pressures. The effectiveness of the sector in responding to these challenges is clearly going to be a critical factor in maintaining it as a significant employer in the region and enhance its capacity to expand and provide more employment opportunities. It is essential to their continued survival and growth that these enterprises and the individuals within them can be guided to and assisted through appropriate education and training.

HIGHER EDUCATION
FUNDING COUNCIL FOR ENGLAND

3 February 1999

Professor John Briggs
Principal
Westhill College of Higher Education
Weoley Park Road
Selly Oak
Birmingham
B29 6LL



Northavon House
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BRISTOL BS16 1QQ

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Dear Professor Briggs

Widening participation: special funding programme 1998-99

In June 1998 we invited HEFCE funded HEIs to bid for funds in their region. To qualify for funding, all bids were required to satisfy the following criteria:

- Meet a regional need
- Promote longer-term commitment to widening participation
- Develop synergy with other funding sources and partnerships

Following seminars which were held in the regions during which HEIs were encouraged to collaborate amongst themselves and with other organisations to develop proposals, we produced a set of priorities specific to each particular region. To qualify for funding bids had to satisfy not only national criteria but also these regional priorities.

Bids were assessed by Regional Advisory Networks (RANs) which were composed of small groups of regional representatives and were chaired by the HEFCE Regional Consultant. Following their discussions I am pleased to inform you that your proposal: New sites of learning: under-representation of Muslim women in HE, has been successful in obtaining funding. Outlined below are the terms and conditions of this funding being made available:



8. Scope of work

The consortium (Birmingham Hindu Council, University of Central England, City College Birmingham, East Birmingham College, Golden Hillock Mosque, Hindu Women's Network, Muslim community organisations, Muath Welfare Trust, South Birmingham College and Westhill College), will undertake work in accordance with the proposal dated 23 September and the revision to this dated 12 November 1998. The work of the project will be as follows:

To investigate the demand for single-sex higher education among Muslim women; to develop and pilot programmes which can be provided in single-sex environments within the framework of a 'dynamic curriculum'; design partnership arrangements which will draw upon the opportunities offered by part-time, distance, community-centred methods of provision and modes of delivery, and which sponsor credit transfer between and within the partnership further and higher education institutions.

The main contact for the work will be Mr David Davies, Deputy Principal.

9. Funding award

The total amount payable by the HEFCE will be £40,000

10. Timescale for work

As stated in Circular 98/35 Invitation to Bid, work under this contract should begin in January 1999. The work should be completed by 31 December 1999.

11. Payment method

Payment will be by staged payments of one third of the amount paid three times per year, minus a retention of ten per cent. The months of payment will be January, April and August 1999.

12. Monitoring approach

Institutions will be expected to provide information about progress in achieving their objectives. This will be done through the Regional Consultant Dr Steven Warburton tracking progress through contact with Mr Davies. Any proposed substantive changes to the programme of work should be discussed with the Regional Consultant or the council's representative.

In January 2000 we will ask for a final report which will include a request for information on how the funds have been applied. The 10 per cent retention of funds will be payable on receipt of a satisfactory report.

13. Termination

We reserve the right to suspend payment of the funding if appropriate.

14. Annex A

Please sign the attached Annex and return to the HEFCE as acceptance of the funding.

We wish you every success with the project and look forward to hearing of the outcome of the work. If you need any further information please do not hesitate to contact either myself or my colleagues Yvonne Perry and Emma Koiston.

Yours sincerely



Dr Steven Warburton
Regional Consultant

Cc: David Davies

Widening Participation Special Funding Programme 1998-99

Institution: Westhill College of Higher Education

Please sign below

I confirm acceptance of the Widening Participation funding allocation of £40,000 awarded to this institution for the period January 1999 to December 1999 in respect of the bid entitled:

New sites of learning: under-representation of Muslim women in HE

Signed (Head of Institution).....

Telephone number and contact name in case of queries.....0121 472 7245
DAVID DAVIES

Please return this form no later than 8 January 1999 to Sharon Lane, HEFCE, Northavon House, Coldharbour Lane, Bristol BS16 1QD

Widening participation: special funding programme 1998-99

Outcome of bids

Widening participation: special funding programme 1998-99

Outcome of bids

To	Heads of HEFCE-funded higher education institutions Attendees at regional seminars held in July 1998
Of interest to those responsible for	Collaboration, Access, Funding and Finance
Reference	99/07
Publication date	February 1999
Enquiries to	Yvonne Perry tel 0117 931 7233 e-mail y.perry@hefce.ac.uk Emma Koiston tel 0117 931 7219 e-mail e.koiston@hefce.ac.uk

Executive summary

Purpose

1. This publication sets out our allocation of funding for the widening participation special funding programme for 1998-99.

Key points

2. In anticipation of the development of a longer term strategy to encourage wider participation in higher education, we made available £1.5 million of special funding to build partnerships and help lay the foundations for effective institutional strategies in the future.
3. HEFCE 98/35 invited HEFCE-funded higher education institutions to bid for funds in their region. The outcomes of this process are listed in Annex B.

Action required

4. No action is required.

Background

5. Since our establishment we have been committed to widening participation in higher education. More recently, in the light of the emphasis given to this aim in the Dearing report and the Government's lifelong learning policy, it has become a major priority.

6. The HEFCE's standing committee on Equal Opportunities, Access and Lifelong Learning (EQUALL) is advising us on the development of a longer term funding strategy to encourage wider participation in HE. In anticipation of this, we allocated £1.5 million of special funding to build partnerships, and to help lay the foundations for effective institutional strategies in the future, initiating activities for development in 1999-2000 and beyond.

7. The available funding was divided among the ten regions according to need. Need was measured by the number of young people (under 25) from poor neighbourhoods in each region who do not enter higher education. This definition draws upon research by the HEFCE's Statistical Unit, which describes students' backgrounds by neighbourhood type. The initiative, however, was aimed at all age groups. The amount of funding for each region is shown in Annex A. –

8. HEFCE 98/35 invited HEFCE-funded higher education institutions (HEIs) to bid for funds in their region. All bids had to satisfy the following national criteria:

- meet a regional need
- promote longer term commitment to widening participation
- develop synergy with other funding sources and partnerships.

9. In addition, regional priorities were to be developed through a series of regional seminars. The invitation to bid emphasised the importance of partnerships and collaboration to develop either a single, combined proposal or a suite of collaborative proposals.

10. During July 1998, we held a seminar in each of the ten regions, to review current practice and develop ways forward. Seminars were chaired by an HEFCE Regional Consultant. Over 500 delegates attended, including representatives from Regional Government Offices, Training and Enterprise Councils, the Further Education Funding Council, the Department for Education and Employment, HEIs and a number of further education colleges. HEIs were encouraged to collaborate among themselves and with other organisations to develop proposals.

Assessment of bids

11. Small groups were set up in each region to act as regional advisory networks (RANs). Members of the networks also attended the seminars.

12. The RANs ensured that the bids recommended for funding involved partnerships between HE providers in the region, and, in many cases, collaboration with other community organisations.

Outcomes

13. We are supporting a total of 25 proposals. A list of the successful projects is at Annex B, with a brief description of the work and a contact name for further information.

14. In four regions - the South-West, Merseyside, the North-East, and Yorkshire and Humberside - all the HEIs have collaborated to produce a single project to address their main regional priority.

- a. The South-West region is to look at barriers to participation in HE and to design a strategy to overcome these.
- b. In Merseyside, the collaborative 'Aim Higher' programme will work through schools and the youth service, and with the Government's New Start programme, to identify barriers to access.
- c. The North-East is to map existing participation and practice in widening participation to help develop an overall regional strategy.

- d. Yorkshire and Humberside aims to bring together sub-regional partnerships to produce a region-led strategy for widening participation.

15. In the other regions, the RANs recommended support for a small number of bids. Most focus on working through collaborative networks at sub-regional level to collect data on participation and develop a strategy targeted at local needs. In addition, a few bids address widening participation for particular under-privileged groups. For example, a London partnership will concentrate on participation in the Government's Education Action Zones; a project in the South-East will focus on adult learners; and in the West Midlands a group will work on improving participation among Muslim women.

Monitoring

16. In all cases the work will be monitored by the HEFCE Regional Consultant, either as part of the steering group for a project or in conjunction with the RAN.

17. A report on the outcomes of the projects will be available early in 2000.

Annex A

Regional distribution of funds 1998-99

Region	£
Eastern	96,000
London	195,000
Merseyside	86,000
East Midlands	126,000
West Midlands	206,000
North-East	156,000
North-West	212,000
South-East	117,000
South-West	96,000
Yorkshire and Humberside	210,000
Total	£1.5 million

Annex B

Eastern

Regional allocation £96,000

Title
Participation patterns in higher education in the East of England

Funding
£59,000

Summary
Analyse needs, develop partnerships and build capacity

Consortium
Anglia Polytechnic University, Cambridge University, University of East Anglia, University of Essex, Homerton College, Norwich School of Art and Design and Writtle College

Lead institution and contact
Professor Chris Green
Anglia Polytechnic University
Victoria Road South
CHELMSFORD
Essex
CM1 1LL
Tel: 01245 493 131

Title
HE participation and progression rates in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire

Funding
£37,000

Summary
To initiate collaboration between the Universities of Hertfordshire and Luton which will provide accurate information on the participation and progression rates in HE of those currently under-represented because of social exclusion in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, focussing on 18-25 year olds.

Consortium
University of Hertfordshire and University of Luton

Lead institution and contact
Alan Weir
Dean, Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies
University of Hertfordshire
College Lane
HATFIELD
Hertfordshire
AL10 9AB
Tel: 01707 285 200

London

Regional allocation £195,000

Title

Establishing a collaborative strategic framework for widening participation in the east and north-east of London

Funding

£75,000

Summary

The overall aim is to widen participation in higher education of people from ethnic minorities and lower socio-economic groups. The objectives are:

- to set up a strategic framework for activities designed to combat social exclusion and promote work in the community
- to increase collaboration between higher education institutions and with other relevant organisations
- to disseminate and transfer good practice.

Consortium

City University, University of East London, London Guildhall University, University of North London, Open University, Queen Mary and Westfield College and several non-HEI partners

Lead institution and contact

Dr Sue Dunn
Director of Science and Engineering Courses
Queen Mary and Westfield College
Mile End Road
LONDON
E1 4NS

Tel: 0171 775 3339

Title

The south-east London HE participation scheme

Funding

£60,000

Summary

- to develop a sub-regional partnership
- to provide an infrastructure to facilitate higher education participation from non-participating communities across south east London
- to develop and agree between the scheme partners a higher education participation policy.

Consortium

Goldsmiths College, University of Greenwich, Lambeth College, Lewisham College, London Open College Network, South Bank University, Southwark College, Woolwich College, and various community groups

Lead institution and contact

Andy Masheter
Head of External Relations
South Bank University
103 Borough Road
LONDON
SE1 0AA

Tel: 0171 815 6701

Merseyside

Regional allocation £86,000

Title

From Education Action Zone to higher education

Funding

£60,000

Summary

To respond to a clear local need and to promote longer-term institutional commitment to widening participation through the establishment of a collaborative, strategic framework, within which future projects to develop educational progression routes would be more effective. The focus is to widen participation for young people and adults from lower socio-economic groups within the newly designated Newham Education Action Zone. This is a geographically distinct and socially isolated area which would enable a concentration of effort for this pilot project.

Consortium

University of East London, London East Guidance Forum, London East TEC, London Guildhall University, Middlesex University, Newham Education Action Zone Forum, Newham Education Business Partnership, North and East London Accreditation Federation, nine colleges and several community organisations

Lead institution and contact

Lynne Chiswick
Head of the Centre for Access, Advice and Continuing Education
University of East London
Romford Road
LONDON
E15 4LZ

Tel: 0181 849 3696

Title

Aim Higher

Funding

£86,000

Summary

To find ways of listening to young people, and to work with them to identify the barriers which need to be addressed, so that they can progress to higher education.

Consortium

Edge Hill College of Higher Education, University of Liverpool, Liverpool City of Learning, Liverpool Hope, Liverpool John Moores University, Liverpool Youth Services, New Start programme and specified schools and colleges

Lead institution and contact

Tricia Jenkins
Head of Access
University of Liverpool
PO Box 147
Senate House
Abercromby Square
LIVERPOOL
L69 3BX

Tel: 0151 794 5930

East Midlands

Regional allocation £126,000

Title

Widening participation to higher education in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland

Funding

£40,330

Summary

To develop effective and sustainable ways of encouraging and supporting the participation of students in higher education by working with young people from disadvantaged groups in the age range 13 to 19.

Consortium

De Montfort University, University of Leicester, Loughborough University and other key organisations

Lead institution and contact

Ms Janet Graham
Head of Admissions and Student Recruitment
University of Leicester
University Road
LEICESTER
LE1 7RH

Tel: 0116 252 2414

Title

Widening participation in rural areas of the East Midlands for second chance learners and employees

Funding

£44,400

Summary

Develop understanding of barriers to participation in HE among second chance learners and employees; build and extend new networks and collaborative relationships between a range of providers, utilising links to various other funding initiatives; develop plans and pilot proposals for widening participation through, for example, learner support centres, peer support networks, advice and guidance, and use of technology.

Consortium

Boston College, De Montfort University, University of Lincolnshire and Humberside, Lincolnshire Training and Enterprise Council, North Lincolnshire College and Open University (East Midlands)

Lead institution and contact

Dr M K Noble
Centre for Lifelong Learning
University of Lincolnshire and Humberside
Cottingham Road
HULL
HU6 7RT

Tel: 0113 233 4785

West Midlands

Regional allocation £206,000

Title

Strategic planning to widen HE participation in Northamptonshire

Funding

£41,270

Summary

To build on existing collaborative HE partnership activity in order to establish a planned and coherent framework for raising student expectations, and improving progression, attainment and retention rates for under-represented groups.

Consortium

Moulton College, Nene College of Higher Education, Northampton Chamber of Commerce and Northampton College

Lead institution and contact

Dr Marie Stowell
Nene College
Moulton Park
NORTHAMPTON
NN2 7AL

Tel: 01604 735500

Title

Rural Reachout – widening adult participation in education and training in Herefordshire and surrounding areas

Funding

£24,250

Summary

Establish 'Rural Reachout' as the brand name of a major innovative part-time access programme with community groups and local businesses; to maintain via regular newsletters a steady flow of information about the project; to use the synergy and expertise of the partners to create a sustainable model of access to, and participation in, a full range of education, training and employment opportunities for adults in rural communities; to prepare a report and action plan for a future funding application; to liaise through regular meetings with the neighbouring project in Shropshire so that both projects may benefit from the synergies of different methodologies and be able to offer a wider curriculum in future years.

Consortium

University of Birmingham, University of Central England, Herefordshire Council, Marches Consortium and the Open University (West Midlands)

Lead institution and contact

Dr Nigel Cutress
The Open University
West Midlands Region
66-68 High Street
Harborne
BIRMINGHAM
B17 9NB

Tel: 0121 426 1661 x 6435

Title

New sites of learning: under-representation of Muslim women in HE

Funding

£40,000

Summary

To investigate the demand for single-sex higher education among Muslim women; to develop and pilot programmes which can be provided in single-sex environments within the framework of a 'dynamic curriculum'; design partnership arrangements which will draw upon the opportunities offered by part-time, distance, community-centred methods of provision and modes of delivery, and which sponsor credit transfer between and within the partnership further and higher education institutions.

Consortium

Birmingham Hindu Council, University of Central England, City College Birmingham, East Birmingham College, Golden Hillock Mosque, Hindu Women's Network, Muslim community organisations, Muath Welfare Trust, South Birmingham College and Westhill College

Lead institution and contact

Dr David Davies
Westhill College of Higher Education
Weoley Park Road
Selly Oak
BIRMINGHAM
B29 6LL

Tel: 0121 472 7245

Title

The contribution of student tutoring to widening participation

Funding

£36,000

Summary

To seek evidence for increased progression of pupils to FE and HE after experience of student tutoring, and explore changes that might improve monitoring of, or enhance outcomes of, this activity; to gather examples of successful practice from other widening participation initiatives; to establish the requirements of further outreach activity by piloting a combined programme for widening participation with other partners within an Education Action Zone.

Consortium

Aston University, Birmingham University, Careers Education Business Partnership, University of Central England, Matthew Boulton College of FHE, Newman College and Westhill College

Lead institution and contact

Dr Honor Dixon
Schools and Colleges Liaison
Aston University
Aston Triangle
BIRMINGHAM
B4 7ET

Tel: 0121 359 3611

Title

Meeting a regional need for widening participation: a strategic collaborative approach

Funding

£24,450

Summary

To demonstrate: understanding of the issues affecting adult participation in mass higher education; the regional need for widening participation in HE; effective strategies for widening participation; provision of staff development and a framework for a phase two project.

Consortium

Coventry University, University of Warwick and Worcester College of Higher Education

Lead institution and contact

Professor John Field
Department of Continuing Education
University of Warwick
COVENTRY
Warwickshire
CV4 7AL

Tel: 01203 523835

Title

The Mid and South Shropshire areas – partnerships and delivery mechanisms

Funding

£35,000

Summary

To map the areas of educational deprivation and need; to reinforce multi-agency co-operation in building HE advice, delivery and support mechanisms; to ensure the longer-term viability of such local support systems.

Consortium

Harper Adams Agricultural College, Open University and the University of Wolverhampton

Lead institution and contact

Mr J R Cheeseman
Project Consultant
University of Wolverhampton
The Telford Campus
Priorslee
TELFORD
TF2 9NT

Tel: 01902 323 433

Title

Widening participation in the Black Country

Funding

£46,300

Summary

To establish four linked community projects in the four Black Country boroughs (Sandwell, Wolverhampton, Dudley and Walsall) to develop intellectual capital for disadvantaged communities.

Consortium

Black Country Partnership for Learning and the University of Wolverhampton

Lead institution and contact

Dr N V Wylie
University of Wolverhampton
Wulfruna Street
WOLVERHAMPTON
WV1 1SB

Tel: 01902 323 433

North-East

Regional allocation £156,000

Title

Widening participation in the north-east of England

Funding

£156,000

Summary

- baseline information – establish present scope
- best practice – identify and disseminate best practice
- future direction – formulate a conceptual framework and strategy.

Consortium

University of Durham, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, University of Northumbria at Newcastle, Open University (Northern region), University of Sunderland and the University of Teesside

Lead institution

University of Newcastle upon Tyne

Contact

Alan Sanderson
HESIN Secretariat
1 Hylton Park
Wessington Way
SUNDERLAND
SR5 3HD

Tel: 0191 516 4403

North-West

Regional allocation £212,000

Title

Widening participation in Cheshire: an FE/HE alliance

Funding

£20,000

Summary

To share information and achieve a common understanding of educational under-representation in rural and semi-rural areas; and to create continuous pathways from FE to HE for students from the county of Cheshire.

Consortium

Chester College of Higher Education and the Cheshire Learning Partnership (Career Connections Ltd, CEWTEC, Cheshire County Council, Cheshire Guidance Partnership, Macclesfield College, Mid-Cheshire College, NorMid TEC, Reaseheath College, South and East Cheshire TEC and South Cheshire College)

Lead institution and contact

Dr L G Turton
Dean of Arts and Humanities
Chester College of Higher Education
Parkgate Road
CHESTER
CH1 4BJ
Tel: 01244 392 711

Title

Widening participation throughout Cumbria

Funding

£46,000

Summary

To develop a framework of mutual credit recognition and transfer, based on the nationally agreed framework for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, which will enable students studying at any institution in the county to transfer or be accredited with 'Cumbrian credits' in order to promote flexibility and choice.

Consortium

University of Central Lancashire, Cumbria College of Art and Design, Cumbria LEA, University of Northumbria at Newcastle, St Martin's College, FE colleges and selected schools

Lead institution and contact

Professor David Vaughan
Principal
Cumbria College of Art and Design
Brampton Road
CARLISLE
Cumbria
CA3 9AY
Tel: 01288 400 300

Title

The Lancashire compact for widening participation

Funding

£86,000

Summary

To identify and adopt best practice, develop and evaluate models, and lay the foundations for a county-wide compact for widening participation.

Consortium

University of Central Lancashire, Edge Hill College of Higher Education, Lancaster University and St Martin's College

Lead institution and contact

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Title

Regional participation partnership

Funding

£60,000

Summary

To establish a partnership of higher and further education institutions within a sub-region of the North-West of England. The aim is to develop an information system to identify existing activities contributing to widening participation, with a view to rationalising and prioritising current activity.

Consortium

Bolton Institute, University of Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan University, Open University, University of Salford and UMIST

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South East

Regional allocation £117,000

Title

The access and participation together (APT) project

Funding

£39,000

Summary

To undertake a comprehensive survey of higher education provision, up-take and reasons for non-up-take from under-represented groups across Surrey, North Hampshire and Berkshire; to define principles and practice for a sub-regional progression ACCORD with a coherent and integrated credit framework; to disseminate good practice through staff development and regional seminars thus contributing to institutional policies for widening participation.

Consortium

Farnborough College, North East Surrey College, Reading University, Roehampton Institute, Royal Holloway University of London, St Mary's College, University of Surrey, Surrey Institute of Art and Design, Wimbledon School of Art, 14 colleges of further education, 41 schools and various community organisations

Lead institution and contact

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Title

Collaboration for widening participation in higher education: a strategy for Oxfordshire

Funding

£39,000

Summary

Investigate the diversity of offer by four Oxford institutions; collaborate with the FE widening participation partnership in Oxfordshire; collect, analyse and monitor data within a regional framework relating to widening participation from non-traditional groups; establish a collaborative and coherent strategy across four institutions; develop local and regional targets for widening participation, and monitor good practice and greater access to higher education for adult learners.

Consortium

Buckinghamshire College of Higher Education, Heart of England Training and Enterprise Council, Open University, University of Oxford, Oxford Brookes University, Oxfordshire Kennedy Further Education Partnership and Westminster College

Lead institution and contact

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Title

Partnerships with purpose

Funding

£39,000

Summary

Funding for a progression network, to be located in the Medway Towns, which will promote wider participation among local people by providing them with an information and brokerage system. It will advise local HE providers on curriculum development and learner-support services, with the aim of encouraging wider participation.

Consortium

Canterbury Christ Church College, University of Greenwich, University of Kent at Canterbury, Kent Institute of Art and Design, Medway Adult Education Service, Medway Council, Mid Kent College of Further and Higher Education, Open College Network Kent and Medway, Open University and the Workers Education Authority

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South-West

Regional allocation £96,000

Title

To examine the conditions preventing access to HE in the south-west and design strategies to widen participation

Funding

£96,000

Summary

Dissemination of good practice, mapping of need, researching barriers to participation, and increasing understanding of the factors likely to help and hinder access and retention.

Consortium

University of Bath, Bath College of Higher Education, Bournemouth University, University of Bristol, Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education, Dartington College of Arts, Open University (South West), University of Plymouth, University of the West of England

Lead institution and contact

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Yorkshire and Humberside

Regional allocation £210,000

Title

To bring together sub-regional partnerships to produce a region-led strategy

Funding

£210,000

Summary

To bring together the work of sub-regional partnerships in Yorkshire and Humberside (subject of separate bids), to produce a regional-led strategy and set up a communications and monitoring framework.

Consortium

An over-arching bid from the Yorkshire and Humberside Universities Association, with three sub-regional strands: North Yorkshire and Humberside (University of Hull, University of Lincolnshire and Humberside, North Riding College, Open University, College of Ripon and York St John, and University of York); South Yorkshire (Bretton Hall, Open University, University of Sheffield, and Sheffield Hallam University); West Yorkshire (University of Bradford, University of Huddersfield, University of Leeds, Leeds Metropolitan University, Northern School of Contemporary Dance, Open University, and Trinity and All Saints College)

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M E M O

From: Yvonne O'Byrne

To: David Davies ✓
c.c. Anita Pickerden

Date: 23rd March 1999

**Widening Participation Project
Technical Evaluation of Requirements**

Summary of action to date

The initial requirement is to assist the HEFCE-funded project to provide distance learning APEL materials to 3 centres within Birmingham. Each centre is expected to have 10-15 networked PCs, and tuition and support for students will be provided by the centre. CLL staff will support each centre in terms of overall guidance to tutors, accreditation of courses and the provision of course materials. Technical guidance is required to determine how each centre may access the Web-based course materials being developed by Westhill.

There are two further issues which have also been considered by WITCS.

- If the pilot project is to be successful it should be capable of being extended to other sites, not only in Birmingham, but also regionally and nationally.
- There is demand in-house from all Westhill departments to develop Web-based course materials. Any software that is purchased for the project therefore has a wider use, for staff and students at Westhill and also for distance-learning courses.

Since mid-January WITCS has investigated 3 Web-based software packages which allow course materials to be put on a Web-site and provide a supportive environment for both tutors and students. The first 2 options were investigated with Staffordshire University, whilst the third has been evaluated with staff from Coventry University and the University of Birmingham.

Option 1 - Lotus Learning Space

This software is used by both Staffordshire University and Birmingham University. It was demonstrated at Staffordshire in mid-January but was discounted on the grounds of cost. The software licences are expensive, and the training requirements and ongoing support costs are high.

Option 2 - COSE

COSE (Creation of Study Environments) has been developed by Staffordshire University as part of a JISC-funded project, and is therefore available to the HE community at a low cost. The software was due for release in late January. Training could be provided by Staffordshire University staff and ongoing support costs could be

identified and managed. It meets the requirements to provide a supportive, Web-based environment, and was initially the first choice both for the Widening Participation project and the Westhill in-house development of course materials.

However, by mid-February it became apparent that because it has been developed for a campus environment, dial-in access is poor. Westhill requirements are therefore met for students users based at Westhill, but the main, short-term objective of supporting the 3 outlying centres could not be achieved.

Advice from the software developers indicated that in order to give access to each centre it would be necessary to set them up with separate Web servers located in each centre. Preliminary investigation indicated that installation costs of £4,000 per centre could be expected. Ongoing support costs for the centres could not be estimated, as much would depend on the expertise available in-house at each centre, but it anticipated that support costs would be high.

While this option would still be possible for completion of the project, it is not a reasonable solution if we want to provide a standard (low-cost) method of connecting other centres in the future. Ongoing support, both in terms of the provision of expertise and overall costs could not be managed effectively.

COSE could be used in house for Westhill-based students, but one objective at Westhill is that modules developed for Westhill students could also be used as distance learning modules. It would therefore be necessary to run two systems to support both types of user which has a number of disadvantages:

- unnecessary complication for tutors
- increased support costs
- increased staff training costs (and possible staff resistance)
- any evaluation of module use and effectiveness would have to be undertaken separately on each system

It is therefore recommended that COSE does not provide a solution for the Widening Participation project, or for Westhill's other requirements. Note: The software is still not available by mid-March, nor has WITCS received confirmation of the server platform hardware specification.

Option 3 - WebCT

WebCT (Web Course Tools) has been developed by the University of British Columbia and is used by both Coventry University and Birmingham University. Coventry University has piloted its use with over 100 modules in the Business School for the past 12 months, and it is intended that all course modules will be available via WebCT from September 1999.

A visit to Coventry University has indicated that it will meet all our requirements:

- supportive Web-environment for both staff and students
- can be developed on a Westhill server for users both on and off campus
- fast dial-in access for off campus use requiring minimal support
- low cost solution

A summary of the Web CT software package, and the main differences between it and COSE is given in Appendix 1.

Costs have not yet been fully identified, as further investigation is required but a preliminary outline can be given.

WebCT software can be downloaded free of charge, and course modules installed at no extra cost. As students are enrolled against courses, the College will have to pay a concurrent licence fee for each one (approx. 60p per student per year).

Dial-in access at each centre would be required. Coventry University has used WebCT over an ISDN phone line with one modem connected to a voice splitter, allowing 16 PCs to have access simultaneously, and achieved speeds similar to on-campus use. It should be possible to identify a one-off installation cost for this. The only ongoing cost would then be for the line rental and call charges, as there should be no need for any further technical support.

Training costs in using WebCT are still to be identified, but staff at Coventry manage training in house and have indicated that only minimal training is required.

WebCT appears to offer a way forward, and it is recommended that (subject to further evaluation) this software is implemented at Westhill both for this project and wider use on-site.

Future Action

WITCS will download WebCT and ensure that it can be loaded onto the Westhill UNIX Web server. (If any problems are experienced it would be possible to set up an NT PC with WebCT to meet the Widening Participation project deadlines).

WITCS will investigate the most cost-effective method of linking centres to Westhill, and finalise costs.

A group of staff will visit Birmingham University on 12th April to evaluate WebCT both for cost and for how it meets academic needs. These include technical staff (Y O'Byrne, A Hassell, C Clifford, P Foxall), CLL staff (A Pickerden) and academic staff (M Lieven, C Hurrell). This will provide valuable feedback on the ability of the software to support students on this project, within Westhill and for distance learning courses.

CLL staff will develop HTML pages of the APEL module for loading into WebCT.

By the end of April a final decision on the implementation of WebCT should be reached. An initial meeting with staff from the 3 project centres will then be held at Westhill to demonstrate the software, and outline the proposed method of connection to Westhill. This will be followed by individual visits to each centre.

Appendix 1

WebCT overview

WebCT provides an on-line environment for learning, teaching and administration.

All staff and students have a common starting point, which can be customised by the institution to meet its own requirements. Tutors have extra features enabling them to create pages and manage class groups. The Web space is secure, and only those students registered on modules can gain access, unless the tutor decides otherwise.

Tutors can set up their own course materials and add to or amend them at a later stage without the need for additional technical support. The software manages the storage and retrieval on the Web server; the only requirement is that the tutor can produce files in HTML format. Existing HTML pages can also be incorporated. Links can be made within the page, to other modules (e.g. common study skills) to other pages on the College Web site (e.g. the library catalogue), and to external Web sites

In addition to the standard Web features offered by Westhill's existing Web pages, the following support is also incorporated:

- class lists - imported from the Student Records system
- calendars can be set up - with general dates affecting the whole group, and customisable by individuals to include their own information
- module email - individually between the tutor and students
- discussion groups - information posted by the tutor or students can be accessed by the whole group
- Frequently Asked Questions pages can be set up to further assist students
- Pages provided by tutors can be annotated by each student (without affecting the original page), and saved by each individual for their own use
- Multiple choice questions (4 different formats provided) can be set to enable on-line testing, with marks seen by both student and tutors for continuous assessment
- Module evaluation form - for completion by the student at the end of the module

The only software needed to access WebCT is a standard Web browser which is Java enabled, making it easily accessible from on and off the campus.

Further information about WebCT is available on the Coventry University Web site at:

<http://www.edu.coventry.ac.uk/webct>

Differences between WebCT and COSE

Both packages offer similar features, but the main difference is in the approach. WebCT provides a secure environment which is controlled by the tutor, whereas COSE is a more open, user directed one.

Web CT	COSE
Only students registered on the course can access the Web module, unless they are included by the tutor	All staff and students can access any Web modules, so that students can work through courses for which they are not registered
Students do not have the facility to produce their own Web pages - essays can be produced in Word and submitted via email	Students can incorporate their own work (e.g essays) into their own Web page which can be submitted to the tutor (or shared with the rest of the group for joint work)
Students belong to discussion groups associated with each module, but cannot join others without the agreement of the module tutor	In addition to discussion groups associated with modules, students can set up their own peer-to-peer groups
Quizzes or tests either for self-assessment or formal testing is available through the software	Testing is not available through COSE, and must be linked in by each site as a separate program
Web materials (such as graphic images, useful links etc.) can be stored centrally for use by all tutors, but will be placed there at the tutor's discretion	Any tutor or student can see all modules, and can collect useful resources in a 'shopping basket' for re-use (original authorship will be shown on any new pages)

Initial feedback from academic staff (David Jenkins and Neill Thew) is that the discussion group and testing features are likely to be the most important for use by Westhill tutors. Further academic evaluation is needed, and will be undertaken by a group of staff on 12th April when visiting Birmingham University.

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Editorial: Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning

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In this introductory editorial, David Jary and Liz Thomas, along with two accompanying contributions from their fellow editors - Maggie Woodrow and David Davies outline the aspirations of the Journal and its positioning in relation to what is fast becoming a world-wide movement to combat 'social exclusion' and widen educational participation and lifelong learning.

Maggie Woodrow examines the multiple meanings of 'lifelong learning' and explores the implications of these in relation to the more traditional objectives of widening participation. Her concern is that the new and often somewhat hazy conceptions of lifelong learning will drive out the more traditional access goal of combating social exclusion. In comparison, David Davies' position is 'ultra modern' and is especially concerned with the general implications of transformations of the economy that are now widely seen as making new forms of Lifelong Learning an economic imperative. The potentially highly radical implications of adult and workplace learning for the traditional university are explored.

At best, the rhetoric of the new emphasis on lifelong learning is a rhetoric of wide 'social inclusion', concerned with social and cultural self-fulfillment, 'social cohesion' and expanding 'active' citizenship, as well as with economic imperatives. But the contradictions within the rhetoric, especially given the competitive forces emanating from tendencies within global society, are manifest and will mean that it may be difficult to always reconcile the competing objectives. By providing a vehicle for the reporting of both research and practitioner reflection this new Journal hopes to contribute strongly to the debate and to ground it more securely in both data and theory than has hitherto always been so.

Mindful of the criticisms of educational research that have been expressed recently some of this well founded some of this less so, the policy will be to seek to establish strong peer criteria for the evaluation of both research and the practitioner's 'voice'. A commitment to establishing a dialogue between researcher and practitioners, and also between researchers and the researched is essential to the project as we see it (a 'triple hermeneutic', if we may adapt Giddens' 1984 terminology). Nothing less would be appropriate to a Journal concerned with Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning!

Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning. Rhetoric or Reality? The Role of Research and the Reflexive Practitioner.

Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning? Is it merely rhetoric or can it be for real? What is the role for research? What should be the relationship between researchers and practitioners? And how will this new Journal seek to contribute these debates?

'Knowledge is Power' and the Historical Inequality of 'Cultural Capital'

Not only is the 'access movement' and the promotion of lifelong learning now populist, associated with what Sanyal (19—) has called the world-wide expansion of the 'social demand' for education, it is today increasingly receiving the backing of governments, funding bodies and international organisations. The reasons why are clear and can be summed up by the old adage that 'knowledge is power': power in the form of 'cultural capital'. And cultural capital is something to which historically different states as well as individuals have had unequal access, a situation that states, institutions and individuals are now increasingly seeking to remedy.

A 'Mixed Bag' of a Social Movement and a Contradictory Social Movement

The drive to widen access and lifelong learning is, however, a mixed bag of a social movement. Different aspects of this movement can be contradictory and the heady rhetoric nowadays associated with widening participation and lifelong learning can serve to disguise the fact that this is so.

It is plain that one important driver of access and lifelong learning internationally is economic competition. If truth be told this is also a fundamental driver for individuals. And why not? It is understandable that individuals as well as governments should want to seek for themselves the economic benefits that education potentially yields. For governments, perceived economic advantage is a fundamental driver in expanding post-compulsory education. The concepts of a 'knowledge society' and a 'learning society', for instance, have undoubtedly become attractive to governments. This is partly because they emphasise that today cultural capital has become a prime mover in what is sometimes portrayed as the new 'weightless economy' - an economy in which 'signs' and 'information' are supplanting the previously dominant heavy industrial technologies. In such an emerging 'post-industrial' economy the belief is that the main prizes will be won by

states and individuals who acquire the most knowledge, achieve the most learning of the appropriate kind to support the 'new industrial' and service economy. There is also one further impact of particular significance for post compulsory education. The workforce will need to become more flexible to cope with ever more rapid cycles of change. It is in this context that the conception of a lifelong career gives way to the conception of the necessity for lifelong learning.

It would be a serious mistake, however, if we were to see the benefits of widened educational participation and cultural capital *only* in terms of global economic competition. While education to enhance career or work opportunities is a prime motivation of individuals and governments, this is obviously not the whole story. Education, in part at least, is also sought, or 'consumed', 'for its own sake'. 'Self-identity' and 'self-fulfillment' are also gained through education. Self-identity and self-fulfillment are derived from family involvement, cultural and leisure pursuits, 'active citizenship' and so on, and education therefore contributes to enhance these. These different benefits of education need to be weighed in the balance when appraising access and lifelong learning. Although work, both for its contribution to fulfillment and the income and status it brings, will often be a prerequisite to the achievement of these other goals, any account of widening participation and lifelong learning must achieve an appropriate balance between the *multiple* increments to human welfare potentially brought by education.

Distinction: 'Democratic' and 'Positional' Goods

As shown by Bourdieu (1984) and Bourdieu and Passeron (1990), even in the cultural realms ancillary to work the outcome (and even the objective) of participation can still be competitive advantage. This can be established through cultural *distinction*, such as 'polished' accents, sophisticated talk, fine art or fine clothes, which can then also underpin differential socio-economic advantage.

Contradictions within the access and lifelong learning movement arise from this ubiquity of cultural as well as economic competition. If we draw a distinction between 'democratic' goods and 'positional' goods, it will help to illuminate the central issues. By 'democratic' goods we mean goods that all can share and from which all can potentially benefit. These include the inherent benefits that stem from education, more effective and more satisfying work, more active citizenship, more fulfilling leisure and so on. 'Positional' benefits, on the other hand, are 'zero sum' benefits, in which the benefits enjoyed by some are to the exclusion and cost of others (see Hirsh, 1977). The problem of lifelong learning is that since cultural capital and education usually beget still more education and cultural capital. Those that start ahead in the race will *tend* to stay ahead in the race, either preserving old niche advantages (such as privileged access to 'independent' schools and elite universities) or using cultural capital to create and monopolise new niche locations (Archer 1979). The risk, then, is that lifelong learning will be no different, with the better opportunities being capitalised on by already advantaged groups. For example, work-based learning for the most educated workers, such as managers in

international companies, therefore increasing the differentiation, relative advantage and income of these already elite workers.

A 'Paradoxically' Unitary UK Higher Education System and a 'Perverse Access'

It has to be recognised that in some respects the advent of 'mass higher education' has actually increased the advantage accruing to elite education. Mass HE has tended to extend the inter-institutional hierarchy, increasing the divide between 'capstone' institutions like Oxbridge, Harvard and Yale and the new institutions created to meet the ever increasing social demand for higher education.

In this respect, the end of the 'binary' divide in UK higher education can be said to have resulted in a 'paradoxically' unitary system (see Jary and Parker 1998), a situation now increasingly exacerbated by a pervasiveness of 'league tables' that impose 'metrics' designed to accentuate difference. The widest accessibility has often been to institutions that may then be characterised, in elitist terms, as 'second-class', or worse. A characterisation of much access as 'perverse access' (e.g. to 'black' colleges, to female only institutions, to inner city community colleges) may even be appropriate. Under these circumstances, the question 'access to what?', rather than just 'access', becomes an important question.

For example Brown and Scase (1994) have shown how many major UK graduate recruiters prefer to recruit graduates from elite institutions, possessing cultural capital, rather than the products of 'new universities', despite the *explicit* emphasis on work-relatedness with which these universities are associated. An apparent triumph of the traditional 'cultural capital' over content or 'relevant' curriculum.

'Second Helpings' versus 'Second Chances'

In her contribution to this editorial, Maggie Woodrow directly takes up this theme of contradictions within Lifelong Learning as she explores the rhetoric of Lifelong Learning. She calls for more emphasis on 'second chances' rather than all, or too much, of the emphasis on 'second helpings', calling also for more 'pluralistic' universities. There is a real danger that in promoting education and lifelong learning the privileged simply access more.

We too see more pluralistic higher and further education as an important goal. 'Perverse' access it may be, but any access is always likely to be better than none! And often it will be much better than this!

The lessons of even a 'perverse' access is that there *can* be advantages in plurality and diversity of access, for example in overcoming cultural barriers, such as the fear of education, in allowing a culturally and geographically easier passage into further and higher education and (Jary, Gately and Broadbent, 1998). However, it is also the case that these advantages are likely to be better achieved if, what David Watsoo (1998) has referred to as the 'reputational range' between higher education is not allowed or encouraged to become overly

extended. Or, at the very least, the highways between institutions along which individual students may travel do not become attenuated. The Californian system of community colleges and progression to university is often seen as a 'good' example of the latter possibility (see OECD, 1990). A further important lesson of educational access, as also true of 'democratic' expansion of participation in other areas, is that the balance between 'positional' and 'democratic' as outcomes of the expansion of opportunity are not 'fixed', it is not *always* a 'zero sum'. There are some ways in which, potentially, everybody may gain. An example of this may be represented by the Internet (Hill and Hughes 1996) in which an increase in the number of people using it does not diminish the utility of other users.

The Opportunities and Dilemmas of Workplace Learning

In his contribution to the Editorial David Davies explores the implications and opportunities of work-based and work-related education for adults, including the new IT based opportunities represented by distributed learning (see also Teare et al, 1998). In doing this, however, he does not neglect issues of social exclusion, suggesting for example, that exploration and expansion is likely to expose the inequalities associated with the workplace and productive life.

While he also stresses the importance of the responsibilities of individuals in taking charge of their own learning (including in some cases paying the full market rate for this) he does see new 'responsibilities' as involving the kind of Foucaultesque manipulation and colonization of 'subjectivities' that imprison adults. There are those (e.g. Tight 1998a and 1998b) who *do* emphasise the elements of 'compulsion' in, for example, the current UK Government's vision of lifelong learning, but Davies is not among those who emphasise this.

Work based education is, of course, not exempt from the same general dilemmas that are faced in general by higher education as it struggles to widen participation, and Davies does not hide this. The same is true of other new forms of 'distributed learning', including IT based learning, where some have seen the dangers of a 'McDonaldized' new higher education, sharpening still further the differences between elite and mass provision (see Parker and Jary 1996, and Ritzer 1993 and 1996). On the other hand, the potential benefits of using new technological, user-friendly forms of distributed learning to take education to new communities and groups are considerable.

Notwithstanding the very real obstacles to widening participation, and the risk of deepening the 'educational divide' noted by Woodrow, it may be that far more is being achieved or is achievable in widening participation than is sometimes assumed. In degree level participation in the UK, female participation has overtaken that of men, and participation by disadvantaged groups has increased dramatically in some areas. Even if the relative access of different social classes to higher education has changed disappointingly little, the absolute numbers of students from social classes IV and V

have increased. We need to take every opportunity, therefore, to extend the reach of education in ways that build on the good practice (as identified by Dearing 1997 and Woodrow 1998) and what this journal hopes to facilitate.

The (Anti-)credentialist Counter-Attack on Access

We should also note that there have been, and still remain, some who object to the very idea of the expansion of higher education and a widening of participation. Prominent among these voices have been those who have bemoaned the rise of what they refer to a 'credentialist society' (e.g. Brill 1999 and Dore 1976). Characterising the increasing requirement for formal qualification as 'a great training robbery' Ivar Berg (1970) for example portrayed the spiraling of educational requirements as a race in which all run harder and nobody gains. Emphasising the 'screening' function of higher education, this is a 'zero sum' view of education, without reference to its intrinsic benefits for self-fulfillment and personal development, a 'positional' rather than a 'democratic' view. This is not to deny that unemployment and under-employment of educated labour sometimes exists. It would be better if work (and incomes) were shared more (see especially Teichler et al., 1980; Teichler, 1988) to realise all these benefits; something that the competitive world context and the attack on welfare makes difficult. But this is a different matter from saying that educational expansion and widening opportunity has no inherent benefits. A greater sharing of work opportunities and an equalisation of incomes is something that an 'access' agenda may also need to embrace!

The Dilemmas of Mass Higher Education

What the above again underlines is that the objective of access and widening opportunity and lifelong learning will not always be easy to realise. The expansion of higher education and a widening of access involves many difficult dilemmas (see Table 1, which originally appeared in Jary and Parker, 1998, where they are discussed more fully).

Table 1: Dilemmas of Mass HE¹

1. Tradition versus Change
2. Quality versus Quantity
3. Excellence versus Equity
4. Exclusion versus Inclusion and Access
5. Research versus Teaching and Learning
6. Pure knowledge (and 'cultural capital') versus 'Performativity' (and 'human capital')
7. Professional control of the curriculum versus Student-led provision
8. 'Donnish dominion' versus Managerialism
9. Academic autonomy versus Accountability
10. Objectivity and Critical knowledge versus Relativism

These dilemmas within one society are further compounded by the new global international competition, which reinforces the imperatives and tendencies for extremes of competition

in terms of 'excellence' or 'eminence' (for academic staff, for students and so on). However, these dilemmas are not irresolvable, and indeed are being resolved. For example, by a new 'accountability' of higher education, which, though there are reservations about the association of this with managerialism and rigid notions of 'audit' (see Jary 1999), is potentially of great benefit in widening the 'stake-holder' constituencies of universities and colleges. Globally also there are positive as well as more negative effects. As pointed out by Giddens (1990) and Held (1995), 'globalisation' is a complex phenomenon, involving a new emphasis on 'human rights' and 'global citizenship' that has many potential benefits for social inclusion.

Current Government Policy

The three major UK reports of recent years on higher and further education and lifelong learning – Dearing, Kennedy and Fryer respectively – have displayed a remarkable consistency on the importance of widening participation and lifelong learning. All three are agreed on the importance of 'partnership' especially with the aim of overcoming the major 'educational divide' between those who have benefited most from further and higher education and the one-in-five adults in the UK who have problems with basic literacy and numeracy, or the 14 million adults whose education stops at NVQ level 2.

In response to these reports, the Government announced a number of strategies, which bring 500,000 new students into further and higher education by 2002. Initiatives like the University for Industry (Ufi) and Learning Accounts have also been announced that are designed to address issues such as skills deficiencies as well as more generally enhance lifelong learning. More general action is to be taken to work with both employers and trade unions to enhance skills in the workplace, and the qualifications framework is to be simplified in ways that give more equal status to vocational and academic qualifications. In addition, greater investment is also to be made to encourage more young people to continue in full-time and part-time study beyond sixteen, and funding to expand provision for basic literacy skills among adults will also be increased. Against all of this, there has been the phasing out of maintenance grants and the imposition of fees. But the necessity for this, for those that can afford to pay, may need to be recognised if access is to be extended widely. No national systems have been able to avoid this step.

Reservations have been expressed about the dependence of many of these new initiatives on an intrusive 'bidding culture' (and an 'audit culture') taken over from the previous government. On the one hand, this can raise awareness and stimulate new activity, but it may also be counterproductive, alienating academic staff with its 'hard managerialist' elements and destruction of previous 'trust'. In turn, this could well give rise to only superficial change, as institutions learn to play audit and funding games (Jary 1999 and Power 1994 and 1997). On the whole, however, the new rhetoric of access and lifelong learning is very much to be welcomed. It is a rhetoric that is there to be cashed, and enlarged upon,

whatever its existing deficiencies. An example of this is a new emphasis on 'strategic partnerships' as proposed by the Kennedy Report and funded by Further Education Funding Council (FEFC); an example of this – "Making Learning Work in Staffordshire" – is reported in the Innovative Practice section of the Journal.

In general, then, the climate can be said to be set fair for the widening of participation, at least in comparison with previous eras. The recent election of 'left-of-centre' governments in several EU member countries further reinforces the likelihood of policies being adopted that support widened participation and the promotion of social inclusion.

The Objectives of the New Journal – and the Educational Research Debate

It is to be regretted, though understandable, that, for all sorts of reasons, access researchers and practitioners have not always succeeded in locating their research work or practice adequately within an appropriate research and policy literature in a manner that contributes to a cumulative growth in understanding. By providing a vehicle for both the reporting of research and practitioner reflection we aim in this new Journal to contribute to the debate and to ground it more securely in both data and theory than has hitherto been so. We view widening participation and lifelong learning broadly, and encourage contributions around a wide range of related issues.

This new Journal is based on the belief that there are neglected links between research and theory, policy and practice in the promotion of widening participation in post-compulsory education and lifelong learning. Articles will draw on research but will, whenever possible, be contextualised within current national and international policy debates. They will also critically examine practical initiatives and other empirical research projects.

We are mindful of the criticisms of educational research that have been made recently (see Hargreaves 1996a, 1996b and 1997 and Darby & Tooley 1998). Some of them are well founded, while some of them are slightly more contentious (see Hammersley 1997). Our policy will be to seek to establish strong peer review criteria for the evaluation of research. Similar criteria will also be applied to the evaluation of the work of reflexive-practitioners.

A commitment to establishing a dialogue between researchers and practitioners, and also between researchers and the researched will also be utterly essential to the project as we see it – a 'triple hermeneutic', if we might adapt Giddens' (1984) terminology. Nothing less would be appropriate to a Journal concerned with Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning!

This being so the hope is that many of the articles in the Journal will not only be written or co-written by theorists or researchers but also by those actively engaged in the practice of widening participation and promotion of lifelong

learning, who may be termed reflexive-practitioners.

In particular, the Innovative Practice section of the Journal will provide a forum for practitioners and researchers to share and discuss specific projects that are either completed or in progress. This section is intended to promote the dissemination of good practice and develop strategies to overcome difficulties encountered.

The Articles in this Issue

Hopefully, the three main articles in our first issue will be seen to reflect the aspirations of the Journal. Certainly each of them illustrates the importance of innovative forms of access. They also illustrate the value of an interdisciplinary link between theory, policy and practice, and research. Since the articles are also international - from Ireland, Australia and Scotland - they should also help to stimulate the kinds of comparisons which can assist in the better identification of 'causes and effects', and are also important if we are not as practitioners simply to reinvent the wheel.

The articles also illustrate the importance of a diversity of research methods. Two of the articles (Powell, and Arweh and Bland) also indicate the value of involving members of their target communities centrally in the research process, not as passive 'subjects' but as active participants.

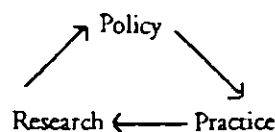
Finally - and this is perhaps more contentious - the articles also indicate the value of a degree of a 'partisanship' in research. In our view, some critics of educational research (notably Darby and Tooley, 1998) get partisanship in particular very wrong. The classic statements of the opposite view to Darby and Tooley's viewpoint are Becker's (1955) 'Whose Side Are We On?' and the enduring tradition of critical theory (e.g. Giddens 1984), both of which justify the adoption of a 'partisan' approach when grounding a counter-balancing case against more conventional 'hierarchies of credibility'. Certainly, this is a role for research that can be important in studies of access and lifelong learning (Williams 1997). Nor need such 'partisanship' mean any loss of 'objectivity', as clear for example in Glasser and Strauss's (1968) seminal formulation of 'grounded theory'. A 'grounded' 'advocacy' can be expected to be an especially important aspect of the 'Innovative Practice' section of the Journal, as indeed is indicated by the three contributions to this Section in this issue.

A Contribution to Research and Policy as well as Research and Practice

We have said that we intend the Journal to provide a service and establish a relationship with both practitioners and researchers. A final point on which we want to end concerns the objectives of the Journal in relation to research and policy as well as research and practice.

Arguably, a key role of research into access and lifelong learning should be to generate useful knowledge and to inform and assist others. One possibility therefore is to especially encourage research that is an integral part of

practical initiatives and to encourage an iterative learning process between practice, research and policy.



Ideally each practical initiative, whether it be an individual project or an overarching strategy should draw from previous experience and related research. It should also have considered the contemporary policy environment. Policy can be defined broadly, not just to refer to government or even funding body policy, but to all institutions, partnerships and alliances that make strategic decisions. Academic research should also seek to respond to the needs of the real world, and to take into account (even if critically) policy trends. We will be disappointed if the Journal does not also contribute to policy in these ways.

The role of this Journal then, will be, above all, to create and maintain an interface between research and theory, on the one hand, and policy and practice, on the other. We hope that whatever your involvement with widening participation and lifelong learning you will find this Journal a valuable resource and will also want to enter into the discourse and debate within its pages.

Endnote

¹ While most of the terms in this table are self-explanatory, the terms 'performativity' and 'donnish dominion' are less so. 'Performativity' is Lyotard's (1984) term for the increased emphasis on practical and vocational knowledge, and the situated source, of such knowledge; 'donnish dominion' is Halsey's (1992) term for the previous self-determining and collegial basis of HE.

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The Learning Society: Moving on to the Workplace

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The subtitle of this position paper refers to 'moving on', and this expresses a deliberate intention to encapsulate some of the themes upon which the lifelong learning debate has focussed (Fryer, 1997) and then to move on to raise questions about learning and the workplace. In doing so an agenda for future work may open up for productive reflection, dialogue and action within the burgeoning arena of widening participation.

The Wider Context of Lifelong Learning

We could begin in the time honoured way by asking a question – is there a shared vision for learning and continuous education as we move into the new century? There is no simple or single answer and we are forced to re-engage with some persistent and intractable social issues which affect individual lives and experiences but whose causes often lie in the wider social and economic movements of the day. It is clear that we are moving towards a 'Learning Society', a term which can denote a range of issues and concerns including the following:

- mass high education in the most developed societies has arrived and universal HE in 21st Century will be the norm
- knowledge workers have emerged as crucial players in economic performance and well-being
- the generic 'graduate job' is disappearing and nearly all worthwhile jobs will soon demand high level skills and qualifications, in addition to a graduate qualification such as a first degree
- lifelong learning is about investment in personal learning and growth and this is compatible with corporate investment and growth
- older divisions such as the academic versus the vocational are dissolving, as are distinctions between further and higher education institutions
- local and global divisions are dissolving in many instances and a common culture of knowledge with shared aspirations is emerging
- part-time and work-related learning opportunities are moving from the periphery to the centre of concern for many individuals and their employers.

We might call these factors the 'providential' side of the equation. However, we are also moving towards a more fragmented society where a series of major threats to stability and prosperity can be identified, including:

- de-industrialisation – which has had a massive and uneven impact globally
- economic crises and permanent unemployment or under-employment – which is a semi-permanent reality requiring continuous management

- inner-city dereliction and the decay of some traditional urban centres
- law and order breakdown or its containment at great social cost
- race and ethnicity as a source of division, tension and in some cases, armed conflict.

We might envisage a breakdown of traditional continuity; what Giddens (1990 and 1991) calls a 'disembedding' of personal life from social life and roles and the emergence of a world of 'multiple authorities', where traditional ties and social and communal structures break down.

Whichever perspective we adopt, it is increasingly clear that learning is becoming ever more central to the growth and health of modern economies and social systems. Continuous or lifelong learning, it can be argued, joins those personal needs experienced by each one of us with the imperatives of both the labour market and personal learning making a nonsense of the old divisions between life and learning and work and learning.

It is already almost half a decade since the 'European Year of Lifelong Learning' was launched. Since then UNESCO has adopted 'lifetime education' as a key objective and the G7 group of industrial nations has declared lifelong learning to be a main strategy in the struggle to combat unemployment. The incoming new labour government in the UK in 1997 declared its priority to be 'education, education, education'. Education has become in effect a nostrum to the problematic growth of the international knowledge economy and represents the cement of the globalising networked society which such commentators as Castells have foreseen as part of all our futures (Castells 1996).

In an era of continuous economic change there is a new and emerging market for all forms of continuing education and professional or vocational competence. New markets for basic further, higher and continuing education and training are evolving. Where, additionally, stable lifelong employment is now disappearing individuals and communities are faced with the reality of loss of skill and competence. Responsibility for responding to this is frequently laid at the door of the individual. The acquisition of personal competency and skills makes the individual liable for his/her own past, present and future(s). Security of employment is best gained, it is argued, when an individual is equipped with a knowledge base which allows one to learn how to learn. The whole previous basis of individual and collective skills is clearly brought into question by this trend and some of its consequences are to be seen in the economically stagnant and 'redundant' regions of the advanced economies.

If lifelong learning is thought to be a vital ingredient in the solution to these economic and social problems, then it may be helpful to explore briefly some of its conceptual aspects. For example, the awareness of the need for greater social and economic advancement through educational opportunity (see DFEE 1996, and 'The Learning Age' 1998) has been a major factor in forcing through educational change.

Following the American experience in the 1960s, higher education in Britain in the 1990s has come to be regarded as a fundamental entitlement for a mass client group rather than as a select privilege for a few. As in the American case (see House 1991), however, we cannot yet be certain that the promises of achievement and success can be met and the hopes of minorities and disadvantaged groups fully realised.

The expanded and new provision is for people well beyond the traditional age and qualifications categories. This is a response which corresponds to the changing nature of employment, leisure and social patterns which are themselves contingent on the evolving division of labour and our understanding of the nature of work and its availability. (See Finegold and Soskice, 1988, Finegold et al., 1992, Gleeson, 1990 and 1993, and Castells 1996).

The arena of work and education is of course a contentious one. We most frequently mean paid work when referring to work but if we were to use the term to encompass the more general notion of productive life it would be possible, arguably, to view work as ... "a potentially progressive principle for curricula..." (Spours and Young, 1988). It follows therefore that our thinking should address the nature and organisation of productive life experience as a key structural feature of our social system and which continues to distribute educational access unevenly and unequally. This particular issue must serve as a key point of reference for those who wish to develop open systems for work-related learning and will help define new and emergent values which allow a culture of inclusion for the world of higher education.

A Market for Lifelong Learning

The traditional role of the University has been seriously challenged by the explosion of research, knowledge, expertise and sheer intellectually productive capacity of the workplace (Jessup 1991). Knowledge workers, particularly those using modern information and communication technologies are required to cope with the needs of industry and business which demand of them a continuous engagement with learning and knowledge acquisition and renewal. Knowledge and competence is, and it always was, a process of continuous renewal but the difference today is that the professional worker can expect to renew her/his professional expertise and knowledge perhaps three or four times during a career. For many professional groups there is a clear need to relate to the sources of updating knowledge. Potentially therefore, lifelong learners as practitioners within an economically and socially networked society, need a continuously upgraded knowledge base. Such learners are potential students and clients of universities throughout their working lives and beyond. Adult students whose lives are outside the 18-21 year old full-time residential experience, and who expect to apply their knowledge to their working lives, are already the majority in the UK and US higher education systems and are the fastest growing segment of the HE market (Fryer 1997).

Adults as Students

Adult students are often specialists themselves who cannot simply be taught. They do not need education, it can be argued, they need tutoring, guiding, counselling and to be given access to the tools for learning.

Competence on the other hand can be viewed as a personal asset in which individuals are willing to invest. It is significant that personal investment in education can increasingly be recognised and accepted in today's international job market. Credits, diplomas, and degrees serve as both signs of personal assets, as well as milestones along the road of lifelong learning. The capacity to transport knowledge and skills from region to region and country to country is fast becoming a necessity in the international and global market place for labour. (Otter 1997, Teare et al. 1997).

Adult students represent a serious challenge to Universities because as learners and 'clients' they are likely to be outcome and result-oriented, are critical and demanding learners and are paying customers for the educational services on offer. Furthermore, they are experienced and often motivated to learn if their learning can be rewarded or recognised at the workplace. (Squires 1987, Field 1988, Forrester, Payne and Ward 1993).

The Learner's Perspective

There has been a long running historical concern with the nature of learning and its purposes in the context of professional and vocational preparation. Liberal learning, long associated with both selective higher education and adult education, was once thought of as an essential pre-requisite for a professional and lifelong "destiny" (Ortega y Gasset). One current debate is about which core or key skills will constitute an adequate knowledge base for 'graduateness' and a future career. Higher education institutions are joined by examining bodies, professional bodies, qualification and curriculum authorities as well as professional educators and Continuing Education (CE) developers in this concern. Whichever version or vision eventually succeeds in becoming the dominant paradigm, the individual seen within its social context will be an irreducible focus for analysis because it is the basis of lived experience.

The concerns which flow from this perspective might include how we handle the great variety of interpretations as the meanings of individuals learning and 'self-learning'. We need, for example, to engage with the learning-to-learn syndrome and define what it is to be competent at self-learning.

Self-learning competency may prove to be the concept that helps us shift away from the historical obsession with learning content towards the theme of how we learn. The idea of 'self as learner' in the adult phases of life involves the key defining structures and experiences of that life, including membership of key organisations such as those found at the workplace. The self as individual is never a self-contained entity. It is work, for example, which not only

confers income but also the sense of social and individual worth and self-belief.

We also need to consider how learning in the workplace can promote autonomy and independence consistent with the values of both the market for labour and of personal survival, growth and prosperity. Learning is most often part of a social experience as is the experience of work. The functional silos into which much technical and professional knowledge has been 'secured' may no longer serve either the corporate requirement or the learning needs of individuals in the immediate future.

Significant sections of the higher education sector have begun to re-assess the changing relationship of work to education. This process has gone beyond the recognition of vocationalism within the established curriculum. Many universities have described themselves as centres of lifelong learning (Duke 1992) and it has been argued that 'liberal education' is no longer at the centre of the English speaking higher education system (House 1991, Davies 1998). Recent expansion has been based on increasing specialisation and vocationalism which have challenged previous paradigms concerning the university's role.

It can be argued that this represents a response corresponding to the changing nature of work, employment, leisure and social arrangements of contemporary life, which themselves are contingent or dependent upon evolving social division of labour and work (Edwards and Miller 1998, Finegold et al 1992). The stringent disciplines of the marketplace and the vocationalisation of the curriculum of higher education have together undermined the liberal approach to higher education and its humanistic and 'open' pedagogic values. This forces us to address the question of whether and how work itself could be seen as a basis for a progressive curriculum? (Spours and Young 1988).

Since work connects us with the life chances and positional goods of modern society, it is work and vocation which must come to denote the strategic focus of lifelong learning for many if not most of us. Work is the focus of a process whereby knowledge becomes defined as "useful" and education and even learning itself can be seen as work which leads to self-fulfilment and self-realisation. Work as an operational educational principle (Witman 1989) is possible for many people, so that learning in, at and through work can be the basis of a curriculum rooted in knowledge of and knowledge about practice. Work thus becomes a site where pre-formulated knowledge can be transformed into new knowledge and where the individual is a primary agent, helping to change and fashion the conditions which help to shape personal and social opportunity. This is the "constructivist" perspective and it places self-learning competence at the heart of the learning agenda.

Partnership with Working Life

The exponential rate of social and economic change of the last two decades has resulted in a major change in people's working lives. A concomitant feature of this type of change

has been the homologous growth in the need for employee competence. Businesses are now looking for new approaches to competence development and human resource management which will share development responsibilities and engagement for the long term. Industry and commerce are looking for partnership with professional providers of educational services and alliances with those organisations whose core activity is competence development. Partnership development involving industry and universities has been one of the leading strategies of government particularly in the UK in recent years. (Hillman 1996)

The ability to combine knowledge and competence and work on cross-faculty teams with a common objective is an organisational challenge to universities. The capacity and ability of universities to recognise work-related learning is also a challenge in both empirical and theoretical settings. (Lloyd-Langton and Portwood 1994). What follows is an account of the significance of workplace education from the constructivist perspective. This perspective in more than one manifestation, underpins the notion of 'sites of learning', which is a key focus of the lifelong agenda explored in this paper.

Workplace Education: a Contextual Perspective

Traditionally, education implies the promotion of learning by transmitting knowledge in circumstances specifically designed for the purpose. The conceptual base for this activity is of course the idea that there exists an available and agreed body of knowledge which is of relevance to the individual and is offered in an institutional setting. It is further assumed that such a body of knowledge is capable of being transmitted.

It can be argued, however, that preformulated knowledge is only a part of the knowledge required for enhancing individual and organisational learning and development. Technological advancement, economic changes within the internal marketplace as well as the need to meet new demands, make organisational and individual flexibility a central issue of concern for any enterprise involved in the 'knowledge industries' that wishes to stay ahead of the market. Once acquired, both individual and corporate knowledge has therefore to be continuously updated and renewed. At the same time, much of the knowledge needed in order to adjust the organisational structure to meet new demands has to be based on specific experiences within the workplace itself. (Revens 1982, Jessup 1991, Wills 1997 and 1998). Thus, new and evolving knowledge must somehow be related to specific work or life situations.

Within organisations there are always new ideas (knowledge) being created and individual as well as collective learning takes place continually. The introduction of new technology and changes within an organisation's structure and culture, also affect this ongoing learning process and creation of new knowledge with positive or negative consequences. The workplace as an opportunity for learning and creating knowledge is often ignored when education and learning is under scrutiny. It is often 'beyond the boundary'.

If we accept that forms of knowledge differ (Donald 1986) we can legitimately ask how a person's relation to the learning environment can be conceived, considering that it is the capacity to establish a meaningful relation to this environment or context that constitutes the educational task.

One way to view this relationship is as an aspect of "task-solving". From this perspective, solving a task implies the acquisition of the necessary knowledge in order to solve the task in question. It is reasonable therefore to view "task-solving" as an existential project (Giddens, 1991). Learning itself can be considered as "task-solving" where engagement with authentic tasks in real-life and real-time settings facilitates the deepening of knowledge and understanding (Bayliss, 1993). Social, historical and cultural variables therefore significantly shape what counts as learning and knowledge. They provide the context from which learning, seen as the subjective construction of meaning derived from experience and reflection, takes place.

Communicative involvement in each other's task-solving strategies is another significant aspect to be considered. In other words, an educational enterprise necessarily has to consider the contextual conditions for learning with regard to its collective dimension as well as those emanating from and impacting on the individual. The argument thus runs that an educational perspective on the work context can be developed by focusing on the learner's active construction of knowledge, where the opportunity for task-solving in terms of action as well as interpretation constitutes the main condition for learning.

The Constructivist Approach

This conceptual approach to learning could be summed up as a focus on learning and the construction of knowledge with emphasis on the term construction. The implication being that learning and the development of knowledge is viewed from the perspective of the learner as the primary actor responsible for the production of specific knowledge. (Lofberg 1989).

The conditions under which people learn in work or in work related activities can be approached from a number of different perspectives. However, with a focus on the educational frame of reference outlined above, the perspective selected must be on these conditions as a context of learning. Organisations themselves, however, can be theorised as learning systems in which the organisations' capacity for affording continuous learning is explored (Gartan 1994, Teare 1998). What learning conditions does the work situation afford? How learners transform a complex work situation into an opportunity that offers relevant support to the learner's knowledge-building activity may yield surprising results. (Davies and Armstrong, 1998, Lofberg 1989).

Conceptually it is necessary to approach a study of work organisations as suppliers of elements that can be used by the learner in order to establish a learning context. These elements will range from the physical environment to the

social networks involved in organisations with different workers viewing the same work conditions from their own specific perspective. Taking the learning context as a point of departure this approach, it has been suggested, has fundamental implications for the development of educationally relevant knowledge. (Lofberg 1989, Bayliss 1993).

It seems appropriate to seek theoretical explanations to the type of questions raised by the contextual/constructivist approach to education based on the assumption that *interaction* constitutes the learning individual, in its social context. By this it is meant that learning is not only a question of acquiring knowledge, it is also a question of being part of constituting the person as a phenomenon in its own right; the implication being that individual development is not simply a repetition of a distinct process that has been going on for generations with similar individuals. Rather, each person participating in a learning process is also participating in the continual emergence of the human being *as an individual and social being*, by actively constructing and creating his or her specific knowledge in relation to the environment. This process could be referred to as *praxis*.

Knowledge in this scenario is seen as the product of goal-directed and functional interaction with the environment as the basic process. Knowledge cannot be conceived as an accurate representation of the world as it is, in any absolute manner. Knowledge must rather be conceived as conscious awareness of the environment, which is composed of goal-directed activity. It is not within the scope of this paper to argue in detail for the basic philosophical and psychological issues involved in this perspective. However, from the educational point of view raised earlier and the need to develop an educational approach that enhances employees' capacity to formulate new knowledge based on specific work-related and life experiences, the above theoretical approach to the emergence and development of knowledge seems at least to reveal a central theme for further investigation. Formulation of tasks and the idea of solving tasks becomes crucial. Thus the construction of knowledge could be understood at least in part as evolving as a consequence of task-formulation and task-solving, whilst at the same time constructing the environment so as to afford more and more diversified goal-directed activities. Taking up this point Berger and Luckmann (1966) over a generation ago presented an interesting line of reasoning in order to understand how social reality evolves with human beings, in interaction with each other, as constructors of reality! And it is interesting to note that Ralf Dahrendorf, a noted sociological analyst of the 1960's has recently suggested a need for the creation of an ethnography of social reality. (Dahrendorf 1999).

The above concepts and theoretical approaches reveal learning and the construction of knowledge as complex phenomena and it is easy to understand the appeal to the educationalist of the more clear-cut theories on learning based on the idea of interaction between two distinct elements: the environment and the person or on 'behaviourist' or 'cognitive' approaches to learning (Bayliss 1993). However, these theories evade some real issues involved when educators intervene in the process of knowledge construction. That

is to say people always are involved in both individually and collectively. Therefore reshaping the educational frame of reference to a contextual and constructivist concept is not only a question of changing educational practice. It is also a question of meeting the challenge of participating in the development of educationally relevant theories of learning and knowledge construction. It may involve the bringing together of theory and practice to produce new understandings, which in turn influence both, and in so doing is revealed as praxis.

The Experienced World as part of the Learning Context

In exploring the impact of experience as the learning context there are two aspects to be stressed:

- the social individual as "bridge-builder" between different forms of lived experience, and
- the construction of artifacts as containers of knowledge and tools for the construction of knowledge.

Basically, the environment affords opportunities to act. This "affordance" (Gibson 1979, Lofberg 1989, Reed 1993) is best viewed as a relationship between a mentally active human being and the environment in terms of what actually is offered. An "affordance" = the capacity to act on and in the environment which = chances to act which = a scheme of action.

In fact this can be viewed as a process of separation. In the beginning, the environment affords or offers elementary perceptual acts - that is to say, we experience and perceive events in the real world and we seek to give them meaning, that is, to understand and control them. With increased knowledge, new environmental opportunities or affordances are identified, where knowledge can be regarded as the bridge between experienced phenomena, revealing new and more complex activities thrown up as it were by the environment. Knowledge is thus not only a question of building bridges between 'affordances', but also a question of building bridges so that the individual person becomes recognised as an agent or distinct phenomenon that can act upon the environment. (Mankind makes history, it was observed by Marx but not always under conditions of its own making!)

The argument here runs - it is unique for human beings to construct symbolic artifacts. Artifacts can be regarded as environmental affordances constructed by people themselves, combining specifically identified affordances and knowledge of these affordances into specific products facilitating intended activities. Considering that artifacts can include everything from technical products to the production of language, and by including such products as norms, values, rituals and institutions, it is easy to see how this production can come to be the material base on which social life is constructed (see Berger and Luckmann 1966). The social construction of reality involves both material and symbolic acts, where meanings are 'manufactured, throughout the routines of lived experience'.

In order to try to build valid theoretical knowledge about

this complex process of interaction between people and their environments, as well as between individuals and collectivities, it seems important to ideofy for future work how and in what way affordances and artifacts appear in specific settings, and in particular in educational ones.

The study of education of course involves not only theory, it is also a field of practice. Educational objectives are often formulated to be achieved through forms of professional and pedagogic practice. The pedagogical question is not a problem of presenting knowledge, but a problem of designing and supporting a learning context that provides opportunities for learning.

Social Constructivism and Workplace Learning

Social constructivists emphasise the construction of meaning from experience by those engaged in a specific context. The variables associated with that context, in our case with the workplace, will therefore determine what counts as learning, and as knowledge (Lave 1988). Constructivists also validate the achievement of 'authentic' and real tasks and challenges, therefore classrooms are seen as an artificial context for learning. The resonances with 'action learning' are clear Revers (1982), Jessup (1991) and Eraut (1994), also queried the relevance of classroom-based formal learning to real practice. The introduction of work-based learning into higher education has drawn support from this theoretical perspective.

The new demands of rapid economic and organisational change make organisational and individual flexibility central to those enterprises which seek competitive advantage. New knowledge, continuously re-newed is required in relation to specific work situations. The workplace it can be argued, is an environment which presents task solving as an existential project (Giddens 1991) and for the individual as we have argued earlier, learning itself can be considered to be task solving. Work thus provides a context focussing on the learners active construction of knowledge where the opportunity for problem and task solving as an active, as well as reflective project, is the pre-dominant condition for learning. The learner has to develop a 'constructive' relation to the learning situation.

The question facing education is this - what learning conditions are afforded by the workplace? Conceptually it can be argued, it is necessary to approach the study of workplace organisations and their conditions of existence as elements in a framework which can be apprehended by the learner. In such a fashion, the learner can establish and construct a learning context. These elements will embrace the actual physical location and organisation of work and cover also the social and reciprocal relationships of co-operation, control and management. The workplace thus becomes a learning context, constructed in its physical, social and cultural realities which affords and sponsors learning action and transformation.

The implications of this approach are significant for our understanding of what counts as educationally relevant knowl-

edge. Theoretically we cannot assert or accept that the learner is a context-free entity in interaction with a given environment. The contextual/constructivist approach to learning takes the individual to be an active social being, engaged in constructing and creating 'affordance' and capacity in the learning process. New knowledge, it is argued, will be revealed in this context of task solving.

In relation to the world we experience, the learner becomes a builder of bridges between different forms of experience. With the recognition of this process, new connections and knowledge can be understood as bridges between potential, affordance (Lofberg 1989), where an affordance is the capacity to act on and in an environment. These bridges (actions) allow individuals to be recognised as agents who act upon and re-shape the environment. For the practitioner educationalist, the key question therefore is not how to present or transmit knowledge, but how to design a learning context that yields the full measure of learning opportunities. It is primarily in the context of lived experience and in the relations of work and employment over a potential lifetime that the development of knowledge and its application takes place.

The intention here has been to raise some central issues involved in defining the learning context as a point of departure for developing an educational frame of reference. It is apparent that a context orientated educational frame of reference must have as a central concept the idea of humankind's own construction of knowledge in interaction consciously with the environment. It is suggested that applicable theoretical knowledge could be explored by viewing the individual as constructor of knowledge and the environment as a context of meaning in accordance with the task-solving activities afforded by this environment. It is also suggested that the practical, didactical issues raised by a contextual and constructivist educational frame of reference should be a question of developing tools for critical analysis of the learner's (or employee's) learning context. It is, after all, in the concrete contract between the employee and the specific working conditions of most people's lives that learning and the development of knowledge takes place. A key focus for future work will be to conceptualise and record key aspects experience-related learning, including that gained in the workplace and throughout life and to explore the new roles available to universities consequent upon these changes. As a single and indicative example only of this future work we could consider the notion of 'sites of learning'.

New Sites of Learning

A fundamental starting point for exploring new sites of learning concerns change in what Bruffee, (1995), has called, the construction of the authority of knowledge. What counts as learning and knowing within this perspective can be seen as contested terrain and is subject to challenge over time. A central theme is that aspects of recent educational experience can be characterised as moving historically from closed to open systems and from a monopoly of knowledge (held by the traditional academic disciplines and their practitioners)

to a shared and collaborative system of knowledge production.

These transitions can be understood as part of a process whereby learning opportunities (mainly associated with adult learning) have been traditionally focused on content-laden, closed and 'objectivist' views of what counts as learning, and have later come to be focused more on the processes of learning, on multiple levels of experience, on open systems of access and on the recognition of learning achievement whenever and wherever it has occurred. This latter perspective has been referred to above as the contextual and constructivist approaches. Their wider educational and sociological contexts embrace a range of innovations which have been 'maturing' since the 1980s and include the following:

- the growth of learner centred knowledge and action learning
- the development of open systems of accreditation and the movement from 'closed' to 'open' knowledge systems and from pedagogy to andragogy
- the development of a national credit framework
- the growth of credit accumulation and transfer (CATS) within higher education
- modular courses and the unitisation of the curriculum
- growth of independent learning opportunities
- accreditation of previous learning and of experiential learning
- a focus on learning outcomes (learners) rather than on inputs (teachers)
- recognition of work and work experience as a key source of learning
- recognition of learning communities as 'sites of learning'

These innovations are now extensive and pervasive in British higher education (Robertson 1994, Jary and Parker 1998) and it is beyond the scope of this paper to explore them in detail. However, they point up the emergence of some key themes which have shaped both the conceptual approach to the overall project described here and may yet begin to saturate forthcoming empirical research and development activity in the field of work-related education.

These themes include:

- 1) The implications for the use and application of practitioner knowledge when it is acquired 'off-campus', and when it is acquired by non-traditional students in higher education who include Access students and work-based learners.
- 2) The explication of the notion of 'sites of learning', where credit and modular systems especially, sponsor innovation in learning.
- 3) The idea of a credit framework and a qualifications framework at both regional and national levels.
- 4) The significance of experiential and action learning for institutional providers (such as Universities) who might find the methodologies alien.
- 5) The use of APEL (accreditation of prior, experiential

learning) particularly in relation to work-place learning.
6) The emergence of new knowledge frameworks utilising constructivist and contextual methods.

It seems clear that the world of the workplace and industry has already significantly re-shaped the work and significance of the academy (Wills 1998, Jary and Parker 1998). Industry is restructuring in networks with members of different sizes and types and universities must increasingly meet the competitiveness, efficiency and quality requirements of industry. This has promoted a networking structure where universities and educational institutions form a compact for development or learning provision network. These networks and partnerships throw into relief the need for new roles for universities and the significance of the evolving but as yet incomplete lifelong learning infrastructure. Can there be any doubt, however, that the learning society is evolving within the interstices of the workplace and that conceptualising this phenomenon represents a major challenge to our intellectual resources. Universities must surely link more with the discourses of modernity and the wider society which are generating new knowledge and learning opportunities if they are to sustain their claim to be at the frontiers of knowledge and to deliver the claim for an expanded and democratic access to higher education opportunities.

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